Church Services at PrideFest 2005 in Acacia Park / Rev. Nori Rost from Metropolitan Community Church & the Rev. Ellen Johnson-Fay from All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church officiating.

This notebook contains a collection of news stories from local and national sources, on events that have affected gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons in the State of Colorado, and, in Colorado Springs in particular, during the year 2006.

Included are articles on the failed statewide "Referendum I" campaign for Domestic Partnerships, as well as the "Ted Haggard/New Life Affair," among others.

Presented to the Pikes Peak Gay & Lesbian Community Center
by
Bob Armintor
PPGLCC Bd. Secretary/Treasurer 1980-1985

January 2007

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"Gazette" 11/22/05

D-11 settles suit over clubs

Gay Straight Alliance among organizations granted recognition

HUNTER McRAE, THE GAZETTE

New District 11 board member John Gudvangen shook the hand of board member Willie Breazell after being sworn in Monday night. Gudvangen was later voted in as board president.

Metro

By SHARI CHANEY GRIFFIN
THE GAZETTE

The Colorado Springs School District 11 board agreed Monday to a settlement granting recognition to noncurriculum-related student groups, including a Gay Straight Alliance.

As part of the settlement, the district will pay $90,000 in attorney's fees for the students and former students who sued the district after Palmer High School rejected official club status for a Gay Straight Alliance.

The settlement, which included a symbolic $10 check for the group, was approved 6-1, with board member Craig Cox opposed.

Alfred McDonnell, the students' lawyer, said he was pleased with the settlement, saying it gives the group the same rights as other clubs, which is what the students were after when they filed the lawsuit.

Eric Bentley, the district's lawyer, said the district does not believe it discriminated against the students, but the lawsuit was financially draining.

SEE DISTRICT 11 • PAGE 9

DISTRICT 11: Alliance divides board

FROM PAGE 1

"The district defended the case all that time because it believed in the policy," Bentley said. "It's simply become extremely expensive."

For board member Karen Teja, the principle of the matter was more important than the expense to the district, she said.

Schools need to be a place where students can explore their interests, Teja said.

"I think a GSA is a program that can be a benefit to our students," she said.

Cox voted against the settlement, saying it may save the district money in the short term but leaves the district open to other lawsuits.

Founders had said the club was formed as a safe haven for students and an outlet to discuss issues regarding homosexuality and gay rights.

The lawsuit, seeking to have the Gay Straight Alliance recognized as a club at Palmer High School, was filed in 2003 after the district denied the Gay Straight Alliance recognition as a club, eventually telling students the club was not curriculum-related.

Gay Straight Alliance members argued the policy was discriminatory and that other noncurriculum-related clubs — such as the Sci-Fi Club and Mountain Biking Club — enjoyed official status.

After the federal lawsuit was filed, the district clarified its policy, saying noncurriculum clubs would not be officially recognized. Nine clubs at Palmer, and 30 districtwide, were reclassified as independent clubs.

During testimony this year at a hearing for a preliminary injunction, then-Superintendent Norm Ridder said the district had always had a two-tier system, but there was confusion about the policy.

Independent clubs are not allowed to use the school's intercom system, are limited to a specific community bulletin board and aren't pictured in the yearbook. Stipends are also not available for independent club advisers.

The district won the preliminary injunction that left the Palmer High School Gay Straight Alliance an unofficial club until it went to trial. No trial date had been set.

The board was still meeting at The Gazette deadline.

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3/25/06 GT

Civil-unions bill closer to ballot

House gives preliminary nod after heated debate

2006 General Assembly

By KYLE HENLEY
THE GAZETTE

DENVER • Members of the House had a good old-fashioned donnybrook Friday on their way to giving preliminary approval to a bill that would allow same-sex couples to enter into marriage-like civil unions.

House Bill 1344 would let voters decide in November whether gays should be granted some of the same rights and privileges offered to heterosexuals under the auspices of marriage.

A handful of GOP representatives support the measure, but HB1344's approval Friday was largely on unrecorded party-line votes. Most Democrats support it; most Republicans do not.

A final recorded vote is expected Monday. The bill is expected to pass and move on to the Senate, where Democrats hold a slim majority.

"What this bill does do is take a long-overdue step for equal protection," said Rep. Morgan Carroll, D-Aurora. "We are not currently offering equal protection to all of our citizens under the law."

HB1344 does not allow same-sex couples to marry. It allows them to enter into a civil union, which grants them the same state tax benefits of married couples, the same inheritance law protections and the right to make critical decisions concerning a partner's medical care.

If it passes the House and Senate — as a referendum, HB1344 does not require the signature of the governor — it would be placed on November's statewide ballot.

If that happens, HB1344 may not be the only gay rights bill before voters. Coming from the opposite end of the spectrum, Focus on the Family is helping put a constitutional amendment on the ballot that would ban same-sex marriages.

Same-sex marriage already is barred by Colorado law; supporters

SEE PROPOSAL • PAGE 2

of the amendment want it cemented in the constitution. Backers of the marriage ban started this week to collect the 67,289 signatures required to place the issue before voters.

The two-hour debate in the House on HB1344 was heated and emotional on both sides.

"I consider this to be offensive," said Rep. Kevin Lundberg, R-Berthoud. "I consider the issues this bill brings up to be offensive.

"This is marriage. We aren't just accommodating some little corner of our culture. We are taking the concept of marriage and revolutionizing it."

Lundberg angered some when he called the bill "pa-

Rep. Jack Pommer, D-Boulder, responded, "What is pathetic is when someone is filled with hate."

Rep. Angie Paccione, D-Fort Collins, declared Pommer out of order and asked him to step away from the House microphone.

Backers of HB1344 countered that it does not tread on the sanctity of marriage in the religious sense. Churches would not be required to practice same-sex unions under the measure.

"We are not trying to legislate the sacred or religious part of marriage," said Rep. Michael Merrifield, D-Manitou Springs.

Rep. Lynn Hefley, R-Colo-

couples don't need civil unions because they have the ability to go to a lawyer and sign contracts that grant similar benefits.

"I have plenty of friends who live together," Hefley said. "I happen to know them through my tennis club. The folks that I know who would benefit from this say it is not necessary."

Rep. Tom Plant, D-Nederland, is sponsoring the bill. He said contracts do not offer the same protections for same-sex couples.

"Contracts can be challenged by family members," he said. "The reason for this bill is to establish equality."

Many opponents to HB1344

against the will of a majority of Coloradans.

"This bill is not appropriate in any way for the people of Colorado," said Rep. Dave Schultheis, R-Colorado Springs.

Rep. Terrance Carroll, D-Denver, said that remains to be seen.

"What are we afraid of?" he said. "It allows us to put this question to a vote of the people and let them decide what their will is. If they think it is the wrong decision, the people of Colorado come November will vote this down."

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What is Referendum i ?

Referendum i creates a legally binding contract that provides committed same-sex couples in Colorado with basic legal rights, protections and responsibilities such as:

- The right to visit a sick or dying partner in the hospital.
- The responsibility to make end-of-life decisions, direct nursing home care, and make medical decisions for an incapacitated partner.
- Enabling the courts to enforce the responsibility of same-sex partners to pay alimony and child support.
- Binding couples to their commitments and holding them accountable to one another.

Referendum i does all this – *without* changing Colorado marriage law.

IT'S NOT MARRIAGE.
IT'S BASIC LEGAL RIGHTS.

YES ON i
fairequal.org

Gay rights protest at AFA halted

By R. SCOTT RAPPOLD
THE GAZETTE

Ten gay-rights activists were escorted off Air Force Academy grounds Friday after intentionally violating military rules against demonstrations on bases.

The group, Soulforce Equality Riders, is protesting at 19 religious and military colleges around the country that prohibit openly gay students.

The demonstration by about 40 protesters was against the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which allows gays to serve in the armed forces as long as they don't reveal their sexual orientation, and prohibits commanders from asking.

Citing a recent University of California

FROM PAGE 1

study that found it has cost taxpayers $364 million to discharge about 9,500 gay service members since former President Bill Clinton enacted the policy in 1994, the protesters brought an oversize check they wanted to present to academy officials.

Jacob Reitan, the group's co-director, said they chose the academy because it is a higher learning institution with "a pretty clear influence of Christian fundamentalism."

They were allowed to protest outside the north gate and visit campus areas open to the public — provided they not demonstrate inside the base.

Reitan said before the protest began they intended to violate the policy and expected to be arrested.

"It shows the lengths we're willing to go to get our message out and the lengths the academy is willing to go to keep this message from cadets," Reitan said.

Some protesters stood outside the chapel talking to cadets and tourists while others stood silently along a wall.

Kyleigh Morrigan of Colorado Springs was among a handful of area residents who took part.

"Hopefully, it will help some people understand that it doesn't matter if someone's gay or straight, they can still protect their country just as well as someone else," she said.

Military police were called when protesters took out signs and began using a loudspeaker.

"We told you you could come up here and do whatever normal tourists do, and this is not what normal tourists do," the academy spokesman, Johnny Whitaker, told Reitan.

The 10 protesters were handcuffed, cited for disorderly conduct, given a letter barring them from the academy and then escorted off.

Academy officials said they were "detained," not arrested.

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Soulforce Equality Ride Nears Air Force Academy!

The Soulforce Equality Ride, according to their web page is " ...a journey to change the heart and mind of America on the issue of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) equality. Following in the footsteps of the Freedom Rides of the 1960's, the Equality Ride uses principles of non-violence to confront military and religious colleges and universities with policies banning enrollment of LGBT students. The Equality Riders reflect on the lessons of history, which have shown religion-based discrimination against women, people of color, and religious minorities to be an unacceptable abuse of the sanctity of religion."

The Soulforce Equality Riders will be arriving in Colorado Springs on Thursday, April 13th. We will be hosting a meeting that evening for volunteers at All Souls Unitarian - 730 North Tejon, Colorado Springs. The event will begin at 7 p.m. At that time, events for the next day will be spelled out and volunteer participation will be coordinated.

Friday morning the group will be bringing their message of tolerance to the Air Force Academy. While exact action is in flux, recent events indicate that the group may be allowed on base. A press conference will proceed any action. We will provide updated information as it becomes available.

Lotto
5, 7, 18, 21, 29, 38
Wednesday's jackpot was an estimated $1.5 million.

Cash 5
1, 5, 20, 26, 27
Drawings are held Monday through Saturday.

Powerball
16, 26, 34, 35, 41
Powerball: 24
Powerplay: 4
Wednesday's jackpot was an estimated $220 million.

METRO

CITY EDITOR: 636-02

THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2006

Inside: • LOCAL

Same-sex unions bill advances in S

Measure gets adoption amendment, now goes to another committee

"I think we're seeing that the public is moving in a direction of equality and fairness for all of our neighbors."

SEN. JOAN FITZ-GERALD – D-Golden, the bill's sponsor

By CARLYN MITCHELL
THE GAZETTE

DENVER • A day after a Colorado Springs family values advocate announced plans for a ballot initiative to ban domestic partnerships, a bill for another initiative granting marital benefits to same-sex couples advanced Wednesday at the Statehouse.

After adding language clarifying that a domestic partnership is not a marriage, the Senate Business, Labor and Technology committee passed House Bill 1344 on a 5-2 vote.

The committee also amended the bill to ensure that religious-affiliated adoption agencies can refuse to grant adoptions to same-sex couples. The measure now moves to the Senate Finance Committee.

"I think we're seeing that the public is moving in a direction of equality and fairness for all of our neighbors," said the bill's sponsor, Senate President Joan Fitz-Gerald, D-Golden.

The bill's approval came the day after retired car dealer and family values advocate Will Perkins and Rep. Kevin Lundberg, R-Berthoud, filed a ballot initiative asking voters to amend the state constitution to ban domestic partnerships in Colorado.

In the event that both measures gain voter approval, the Perkins-Lundberg initiative would trump the measure put forth through HB 1344, which is a statutory rather than a constitutional question.

Perkins spearheaded the 1992 effort to pass Amendment 2, widely seen as an effort to sanction discrimination against gays. Voters approved it, but it was struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Perkins' latest effort is the third same-sex union question that could be presented to voters in November.

The other, supported by Colorado Springs-based Focus on the Family, asks voters to amend the Colorado Constitution to define marriage as being between one man and one woman. State law already does that, but backers want the idea to be less vulnerable to legislative attack, so they want it added to the constitution.

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GT 6/13/06

GAY MARRIAGE

Government has no business in sanctioning marriage

Wouldn't it be nice if the government could stay out of the debate concerning the status of marriage? Why not remove the legal status of marriage entirely? Why should it be any business of the government? Then everyone in society would be treated as individuals. How and with whom they want to live would not be a concern of government.

Everyone would file an individual income tax return. Why should someone who is married or single be penalized? No more deductions for children: Why should a childless couple or a single person support people who want to have a dozen kids?

If a couple wants to have their commitment sanctified in a church, great. If that particular church happens to condemn them to eternal damnation if they back out of their commitment, so be it. If a church wants to sanctify the commitment of two people of the same sex, wonderful. If you just want to unite in a nonreligious ceremony where you write your own vows, super. If you just want to live together as roommates to save on housing costs, that's fine with me.

Everyone should complete a will of how to dispose of their property and possessions. If there is no will, everything would go to Uncle Sam. A similar document should be prepared if you become ill and/or incapacitated. If none exists, the doctor/hospital would decide.

If 50 percent of a child's genes belong to you, you'd owe him/her monetary support until he/she is 18, just like today.

John Vomastic
Manitou Springs

Gays aren't a threat to traditional marriage

I want to thank Dick Maxwell for his heads-up ("Married couples need info to panic properly," Letters, June 11). My husband and I need to worry about our 38-year marriage, also. The "radical gay agenda" that James Dobson writes about is perhaps more terrifying than we had realized. If they, the gays, want to legalize their loving, committed relationships and to have equal civil rights, where does that leave us? Oh, yeah; floating around in the heterosexual world where almost 50 percent of marriages end in divorce.

I just had an idea. Sen. Wayne Allard and Dobson should rally their forces and push for a constitutional amendment to ban heterosexual divorce. Let's protect marriage from its most obvious threat. And that ban would guarantee that every child would have a two-parent, a-man-and-a-woman family.

Marsha Abelman
Colorado Springs

Many gays aren't aware they are pushing an agenda

So, the American Psychiatric Association has "given in" to pressure from the so-called gay lobby ("Gays try to force agenda on the rest of us," Letters, June 10). Where is James Pittman's proof of that? Perhaps the APA knows a little more about the issue than some. And what, exactly, is the "gay agenda"? I know many gay people and none of them has a clue as to what the agenda is.

Pittman probably works with, lives near or associates with someone who is gay. He is most likely unaware of this. Why do you suppose that is? Could it be that these people are not able to discuss who they are around people who have the narrow-minded attitude he has? And does he think there is one person on this earth who would choose to be gay, knowing the hardships involved in a society where they are hated because of their sexual preference?

Every homosexual person I have known has been just like everyone else around, except for sexual preference. Most are in long-term relationships. They have no interest in influencing anyone around them.

I don't claim to be a religious person, but my understanding of what Jesus Christ's message was, is sorely contradicted, day in and day out, by people who profess to be his followers. Did he not preach acceptance, love and kindness? And did God not create all of us? So, did he make a mistake when he created some to be gay?

Sally Alberts
Monument

GT 6/21/06

People go to extremes to discredit gay marriage

The Rev. Bill Carmody did not address gay marriage, but instead brought up polygamy and men marrying young girls ("Columnist missed porpoise of amendment," Letters, June 14). This is exactly the kind of tactic some people use to sidetrack the topic of gay marriage or civil unions.

Gay relationships are between consenting adults who are free as Americans and God's children to live their lives as God has called them. They do not threaten anyone else's marriage or well being. Neither the Catholic church nor any other faith will be forced to sanction gay marriages or any other relationship outside their doctrine.

If Carmody wishes to protect young girls from polygamous relationships, I commend his efforts. This should be done. But it has nothing to do with gay marriage.

Will Rapp
Colorado Springs

MARRIAGE-GO-ROUND

6/25/06 GT "+"

Ballot measure requires legal responsibility

Focusing on gay marriage right now is directing our attention away from the significant issues facing us here in Colorado: one of the lowest high school graduation rates, the soaring number of bankruptcies and a housing market that is bottoming out, among other things. To ease the minds of those who are wavering over the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act referendum before voters in November, and to get us back to the state's crucial concerns, I want to point out it will not permit marriage for lesbians and gays. What it will do is require that such couples live up to the same responsibilities now demanded from married, heterosexual couples.

The referendum will ensure that same-sex domestic partners make the necessary decisions if a partner is hospitalized, and if one of them dies, will take care of paying off any debts, administer the estate and be held accountable to the government concerning taxes, burial and so on.

And especially if children are involved, the bill will create solid, legal ties for both partners to continue providing care for the children's health, education and welfare should the partnership be dissolved.

This proposal simply acknowledges the fact that same-sex partners exist, and that some households include children, and so it is prudent to make sure that these children, just as those from heterosexual breakups, continue to be the fiscal responsibility of the partners. Even Focus on the Family, who sponsored the constitutional amendment limiting marriage to a union of a man and woman in Colorado, specifically drafted this language applying to children to co-exist with a domestic partnership law. In a nation that believes in individual accountability and social responsibility, the Domestic Partnership Act will make sure that in this area of life, these two words are law. Society can only benefit.

Riki Matthews
Denver

"GT" 7/8/06

"We don't really ever talk about things around here in a community way."

MARY LOU MAKEPEACE – Director of the Colorado Springs-based Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado

HUNTER McRAE, THE GAZETTE

A Denver-based foundation poured $900,000 into an ad campaign featuring a puppy who moos. Some of the ads, on television, billboards and downtown banners, say the dog was just born different and are only in Colorado Springs because of a negative reputation with gay and lesbian relations.

GT 6/21/06

People go to extremes to discredit gay marriage

The Rev. Bill Carmody did not address gay marriage, but instead brought up polygamy and men marrying young girls ("Columnist missed porpoise of amendment," Letters, June 14). This is exactly the kind of tactic some people use to sidetrack the topic of gay marriage or civil unions.

Gay relationships are between consenting adults who are free as Americans and God's children to live their lives as God has called them. They do not threaten anyone else's marriage or well being. Neither the Catholic church nor any other faith will be forced to sanction gay marriages or any other relationship outside their doctrine.

If Carmody wishes to protect young girls from polygamous relationships, I commend his efforts. This should be done. But it has nothing to do with gay marriage.

Will Rapp
Colorado Springs

MARRIAGE-GO-ROUND

6/25/06 GT

Ballot measure requires legal responsibility

Focusing on gay marriage right now is directing our attention away from the significant issues facing us here in Colorado: one of the lowest high school graduation rates, the soaring number of bankruptcies and a housing market that is bottoming out, among other things. To ease the minds of those who are wavering over the Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act referendum before voters in November, and to get us back to the state's crucial concerns, I want to point out it will not permit marriage for lesbians and gays. What it will do is require that such couples live up to the same responsibilities now demanded from married, heterosexual couples.

The referendum will ensure that same-sex domestic partners make the necessary decisions if a partner is hospitalized, and if one of them dies, will take care of paying off any debts, administer the estate and be held accountable to the government concerning taxes, burial and so on.

And especially if children are involved, the bill will create solid, legal ties for both partners to continue providing care for the children's health, education and welfare should the partnership be dissolved.

This proposal simply acknowledges the fact that same-sex partners exist, and that some households include children, and so it is prudent to make sure that these children, just as those from heterosexual breakups, continue to be the fiscal responsibility of the partners. Even Focus on the Family, who sponsored the constitutional amendment limiting marriage to a union of a man and woman in Colorado, specifically drafted this language applying to children to co-exist with a domestic partnership law. In a nation that believes in individual accountability and social responsibility, the Domestic Partnership Act will make sure that in this area of life, these two words are law. Society can only benefit.

Riki Matthews
Denver

"GT" 7/8/06

"We don't really ever talk about things around here in a community way."

MARY LOU MAKEPEACE – Director of the Colorado Springs-based Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado

HUNTER McRAE, THE GAZETTE

A Denver-based foundation poured $900,000 into an ad campaign featuring a puppy who moos. Some of the ads, on television, billboards and downtown banners, say the dog was just born different and are only in Colorado Springs because of a negative reputation with gay and lesbian relations.

A different voice in Springs

Gay-rights ads aim to spark discussion in 'hostile' city

By **PERRY SWANSON**
THE GAZETTE

For the past two weeks, pedestrians in downtown Colorado Springs have been strolling past gay-rights signs and posters, probably without even knowing it.

A puppy named Norman who says "moo" instead of "woof" is the star of an advertising campaign targeting Colorado Springs. On television, the ads say Norman can't help acting like a cow, he was just born different.

The downtown signs, though, are more cryptic, showing only Norman and the word moo.

But backers of the ad campaign said Norman's story is a metaphor for gay people. They argue everyone is born with a sexual orientation.

An online presentation at www.borndifferent.org raises a question for doubters: "When did you decide to be straight?"

SEE **DIFFERENT** • PAGE 5

DIFFERENT: Ads are only in Colorado Springs

FROM PAGE 1

The Denver-based Gill Foundation spent $900,000 on the campaign, which includes television ads, billboards and banners over downtown streets. It began in early June and will continue through early August.

The ads are only in Colorado Springs, which, organizers say, has a reputation for being hostile to homosexuals. The reputation dates back at least 14 years to a state constitutional amendment Colorado voters approved banning protected status for gays. The amendment's backers were based here. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the amendment in 1996.

Colorado Springs also is home to the Christian ministry Focus on the Family, which has drawn criticism from gay activists nationally for its position that "homosexuality is preventable and treatable."

"The Springs are seen nationally as a battleground of social issues," said Bobby Rauzon, a spokesman for the ad campaign.

Many of the advertisements do not directly address sexuality. The street banners, for example, feature only the silhouette of Norman and the word moo. That message didn't reach Eddie Cheesman, a Colorado Springs resident who has seen the banners from his job at a club on Tejon Street. Cheesman said he's also seen the TV commercials, and recently several people were downtown handing out napkins printed with the dog image and Web site address.

"I haven't actually been online to see it, but I've seen the commercials, and I guess it's about equality," he said. "I kind of thought, 'What do you mean different? Do you mean like another limb or something?' I mean, everybody's born different."

Rauzon said advertising designers deliberately took a soft approach.

"It was definitely designed to get people talking, wondering, asking questions about what is this," he said. "It's friendly, and it's not heavy-handed, and it's designed just to get people talking," he said.

The campaign Web site points readers to a news release from the University of East London on research released last year that found 2 percent to 4 percent of people are born gay. It also notes homosexuality in the animal kingdom and says it's impossible for gays to change their sexuality.

The idea isn't to offer conclusive scientific proof one way or the other but to stimulate discussion, said Mary Lou Makepeace, director of the Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado, which is based in Colorado Springs. The fund is a project of the Gill Foundation.

"I think we have kind of an unfair label as an intolerant community, and yet we don't really ever talk about things around here in a community way," said Makepeace, who is also the former city mayor. "We have this reputation, and whether it's fair or unfair, we still have it, and we need to deal with it."

Even if the ads aren't supposed to start technical, scientific discussions, a psychologist for Focus on the Family said the campaign gives the false impression of a consensus among experts. Bill Maier, vice president and psychologist in residence at Focus, said scientists have reached no conclusions on a biological basis for homosexuality.

Maier said he suspects the campaign is a cloaked effort to advance political agendas such as legal gay marriage.

"What saddens me the most about this is that gays and lesbians themselves are being kept in the dark about the true nature of sexuality," he said.

Makepeace said she just wants to spark discussions, not tell people what to think.

"There is so little community dialogue in Colorado Springs that I would just enjoy people over drinks or coffee or dinner saying, 'What do you think?'" she said.

GT 7/12/06

'Moo' campaign sets off sparks

Herpin, Rivera fear light poles being politicized

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

A gay-rights advertising campaign featuring a puppy who says "moo" has drawn scrutiny from some members of the Colorado Springs City Council, who said city light poles shouldn't be used for political statements.

The Born Different ad campaign has been running since early June in TV commercials, on billboards, yard signs and other media.

SEE MOO • PAGE 5

The Born Different campaign is featured on public buses as well as light poles. But the buses haven't drawn the ire of Councilman Bernie Herpin.

CAROL LAWRENCE, THE GAZETTE

): Partnership in cross hairs

OM PAGE 1

sage is that gay e born that way, s are intended to ersations on the paign organizers

ionel Rivera and Bernie Herpin stions this week aign banners hang- y light poles down- r elements of the n more directly ad- bject of sexual ori- ut the downtown ow only the silhou- dog and the word

, that's politicizing ge that we're put- ur lampposts, and lampposts it gives ibility that the city he campaign, which city does not," Her- Tuesday. "The city n a stand one way r."

and Rivera asked t on the review pro- advertisements ap- r the poles. City an Sue Skiffington- said that report will be ready in about .

Colorado Springs Partnership, an t promotes econom- pment downtown, he banner advertis- a city permit. Her- he learns that the p guidelines allow tisements he'll seek the rules. Failing in said, he would voking the partner- it.

lly it wouldn't come said.

who's also a Republi- ate to represent Col- Congressional Dis- t reply to a call seek- ent. He said at a ouncil meeting that anners to make po- litical statements is inappropriate.

The Born Different advertising campaign is a $900,000 effort funded by the Denver-based Gill Foundation. It's running only in Colorado Springs, which organizers say they selected because of the city's reputation as being unfriendly to gays.

Banners for the Born Different campaign on downtown light poles are indeed prompting discussion, so maybe they're working, a Gill Foundation spokesman said.

HUNTER McRAE, THE GAZETTE

ONLINE
The Web site of the Born Different campaign is www.born-different.org.

Gill Foundation spokesman Bobby Rauzon said Tuesday no city official had contacted the campaign about concerns over its content.

"This actually doesn't have anything to do with anything political, it's a simple effort to try and foster an honest dialogue, and I think that here in El Paso County that dialogue has been lacking," he said.

"Maybe it's worked. City councilors are talking about it. The mayor's talking about it. We hope they continue talking about the puppy that moos."

The city government has ties to advertising in other venues, including on the outside of public buses, where other Born Different ads appear. Herpin said he doesn't oppose those ads because he thinks people know the placement doesn't imply an endorsement from the city.

Councilman Jerry Heimlicher said he sees no reason for the city to intervene to stop the downtown banner advertisements.

"If it passed their smell test for putting it on the poles, then that's judgment enough for me," Heimlicher said, referring to the Downtown Partnership.

"I don't consider them political statements. I think they're quite clever, and they certainly accomplish their goal of trying to get people to talk about 'What does that stand for?' So what's the harm?"

The Downtown Partnership and a predecessor organization have managed the lamppost advertising program for at least two decades, said Director Beth Kosley.

Only nonprofit organizations are allowed to display banners, which are typically tied to an event such as the Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo.

The cost for space is $50 for 10 poles. The time banners stay on the poles varies, Kosley said.

The agency received a few complaints about six years ago when banners downtown promoted the National Day of Prayer. The Downtown Partnership decided the banners were appropriate, Kosley said.

She said the agency's executive board discussed the Born Different banners Tuesday morning and identified no problems.

GT 7/19/06

Campaign encourages people to examine their beliefs

By MARY LOU MAKEPEACE
GAY AND LESBIAN FUND FOR COLORADO

By now, you've likely heard of or seen Norman, the puppy that moos. When I first heard of Norman, I was unsure of how families of the Springs would receive him. I have been delighted to see that people of our community are engaging in an honest dialogue about Norman, and I hope it continues. The opinion page of this paper should serve us well in this discussion.

Norman is a puppy that moos. He doesn't know why he moos. And as you've seen in the TV ads, he was born that way. Norman is a simple metaphor for a much larger issue. Just as Norman was born to moo, gay people are born gay. At least, that's what's advocated at the borndifferent.org Web site, which is home to all the Norman ads. And it's something I believe, as well.

For the past three years, I have served as executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado and before that as mayor of this wonderful city. I have heard diverse viewpoints and opinions about whether gay people are born gay or whether they choose to be gay. Pundits have pointed out that in El Paso County we are in the heart of conservative country, and that our views of homosexuality are reflected by those of the religious right. We all know that's not true. There's no way we all think alike on this or any other issue.

But our differences should not define us. We can have a healthy discussion about whether people choose or are born with their sexuality, and I hope more people take time to write in to this newspaper to express their views.

The beauty of Norman is that he represents the experience of many gay and lesbian individuals in our community. As you may have seen in the TV ads, Norman struggles to fit in. He's a puppy that moos, and he's ostracized and treated differently because he is, by nature, different.

Mary Lou Makepeace

I believe that we in the Pike's Peak region are well-educated, family-oriented, tolerant and rational-minded people. We embody the spirit of the American West. We understand that there are people who believe differently, and that a community with different political and religious views can still engage in a healthy discussion without resorting to personal attacks and insults.

Colorado Springs has been unfairly labeled as a hot-bed of intolerance and a battleground of social politics and moral skirmishes. This campaign of Norman is beginning to change that label given to our community.

We are now taking time to consider a different question: whether gay people are born gay or choose to be gay. I believe that when people reflect on their own sexuality and talk about it openly, they'll realize that there is no moment in time when any of us chose our sexuality. Heterosexual people, asked when they chose to be straight, cannot answer the question. The same is true of our homosexual neighbors, friends and family members.

In the end, nobody should be told what to believe. And that's the best part of Norman and his message. By watching a puppy that moos and how he's treated differently, we can search our own beliefs and ponder the question in our hearts. And the people of Colorado Springs will reach their own conclusions. Which, for those of us engaged in this work, is all we can hope for.

Makepeace is executive director of the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado.

GT 7/19/06

BORN DIFFERENT?

City lampposts no place for political messages

Whether or not you agree with the premise behind the "mooing puppy" campaign, I do not believe the advocating of this issue is an appropriate use of city-owned lampposts for two important reasons: It implies an endorsement of the issue by the city and it sets a bad precedent (" 'Moo' campaign sets off sparks," The Gazette, July 12).

I do not believe the majority of our citizens would approve of banners proclaiming anti-gay, anti-war, anti-abortion, or racist messages.

Likewise, it would not be an appropriate use of our lampposts to proclaim pro-war, pro-life, pro-choice or even pro-gun positions. Nor should we see banners supporting a particular political candidate or ballot issue hanging from our city lampposts.

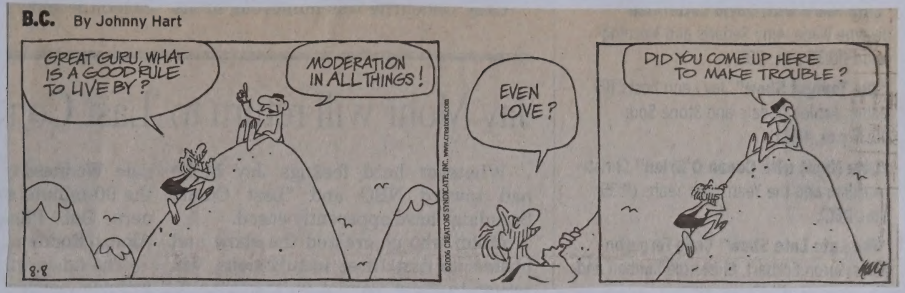
Our lampposts should be used only to announce city events of interest to the general public, such as the banners announcing last week's Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo.

While the moo campaign has at least partly satisfied one of its goals — to begin a discussion of their issue — it has also shown that we need to examine our banner-handling policy so our lampposts don't become the political soapbox for any issue whose supporters can afford to hang banners. One need only look at the myriad bumper stickers on our cars to realize how dangerous it would be to open our lampposts to any and all issues. Let's leave the promotion of political and social issues to the backs of private vehicles and billboards.

Bernie Herpin
City Councilmember at-large
Colorado Springs

Mooing puppy a reminder we can't change who we are

The "moo" campaign is creating a lot of dialogue over whether people are born gay. The Gill Foundation is not pushing any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SATURDAY, JULY 16th
DOWNTOWN AT ACACIA PARK

Colorado Springs Independent

GT 7/19/06

House kills amendment to ban gay marriage

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON • The House rejected a proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage on Tuesday.

The vote was 236-187 in favor, with one member voting "present," a slight increase in support over the previous House vote just before the 2004 election, which was 227-186, but still 46 short of the two-thirds majority needed to advance a constitutional amendment.

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Mooing puppy a reminder we can't change who we are

The "moo" campaign is creating a lot of dialogue over whether people are born gay. The Gill Foundation is not pushing any agenda by sponsoring this campaign; It is simply trying to stimulate discussion in El Paso County.

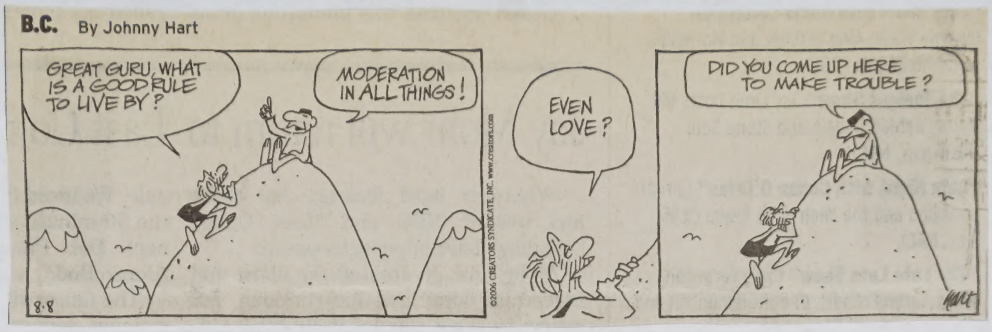
The campaign uses the tag line "born different" but I'm afraid people have misinterpreted the word "born." Just because they use the term "born gay" is not meant to imply that only genetics are involved. It simply means that someone cannot change who they are.

The campaign asks heterosexuals: "When did you choose to be straight?" Most straight people would respond that they never chose their sexual identity, that's just how they are.

This discussion is reminiscent of every nature vs. nurture debate, all of which have proved decidedly inconclusive. The American Psychological Association says, "most scientists today agree that sexual orientation is most likely the result of a complex interaction of environmental, cognitive and biological factors. Human beings can not choose to be either gay or straight. Sexual orientation emerges for most people in early adolescence without any prior sexual experience."

Although our environment does play a role in sexual orientation, people are born gay. Being born gay means that someone did not choose their lot in life and cannot change how they are. At least we know that James Dobson and lesbians can agree on something: for both of them, kissing a man is completely unnatural.

Erin Bennett
Citizens Project
Colorado Springs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"Gazette" 7/11/06

SHOWER OF STOLES

KRISTIN GOODE, THE GAZETTE

The Rev. Dan Koeshall, now part of the Pikes Peak Metropolitan Church, served for 10 years as an Assemblies of God minister in Escondido, Calif., before being kicked out for admitting he is gay. His story is similar to many being told during this weekend's Shower of Stoles exhibit.

KRISTIN GOODE, THE GAZETTE

Rev. Dan Koeshall will decide whether to donate his first stole to the Shower of Stoles after seeing the exhibit this weekend.

STOLES: More than 1,000 given to project

FROM PAGE 1

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REV. DAN KOESHALL – Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church interim pastor

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Koeshall said he'll decide

"Gazette" 7/11/06

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Journeys of faith and sexuality

Project relates gay clergy's struggle for acceptance

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

When church leaders found out the Rev. Dan Koeshall was gay, they fired him as associate pastor of the congregation he helped lead in southern California.

Now the interim pastor of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church in Colorado Springs, Koeshall's story reflects those of hundreds of gay and lesbian clergy.

Many have been fired or otherwise ushered out after revealing their sexual orientations. The result is a "huge loss to the church of gifted leadership," according to the Shower of Stoles Project, which honors gay pastors and other people of faith who have struggled for acceptance.

Some of the stories will be on display this weekend in an exhibit of the Shower of Stoles Project at First Congregational Church. Stoles are long strips of fabric often given to pastors on their ordination to ministry. The exhibit corresponds with the annual PrideFest event at Acacia Park in downtown Colorado Springs.

Koeshall received his first stole as a minister in the Assemblies of God denomination. He still has the simple white and burgundy cloth.

"I've never worn this since I got kicked out of the Assemblies of God, but I've just always had it in my desk drawer in my church office," he said. "It's not an easy road to get to the point of getting this. There's a lot of soul-searching, a lot of prayer, a lot of sacrifice."

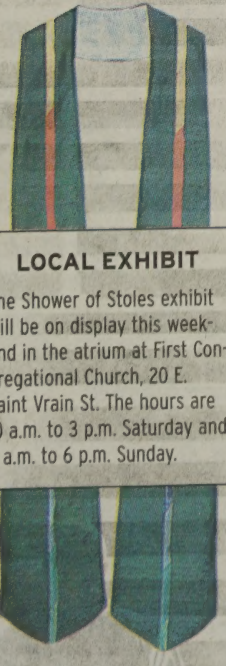
Koeshall, 46, said he tried to stop being gay. In the mid-1980s he twice attended a 20-week course designed to change sexual orientation.

"I wanted to be the best evangelical Christian that I could be, and I flunked the class, it didn't change me," he said. "But I got enough information to where I could hide it, my sexuality."

Koeshall attended Fuller Theological Seminary, received a minister's license in 1988 and was ordained in 1991.

He had been an associate pastor

SEE STOLES • PAGE 4



LOCAL EXHIBIT

The Shower of Stoles exhibit will be on display this weekend in the atrium at First Congregational Church, 20 E. Saint Vrain St. The hours are 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

ONLINE

To learn more about the Shower of Stoles Project, visit www.welcomingresources.org/sosp.

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STOLES: More than 1,000 given to project

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"He said 'When you walk out these doors, you are leaving the Assemblies of God forever,'" Koeshall recalled, "'and may the slamming of the doors behind you echo for a long time.'"

Koeshall said the effect was devastating, but it led him to a role providing spiritual guidance for others who have faced rejection. He even ɔkes about the past, calling mself "Former Assemblies God," and grinning as he ɔints out the title's acronym.

More than 1,000 people have given their stoles to the Shower of Stoles Project. Thirty will be on display this weekend, each including a description of the person who donated it.

"I've never worn (my first stole) since I got kicked out of the Assemblies of God, but I've just always had it in my desk drawer in my church office."

REV. DAN KOESHALL – Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church interim pastor

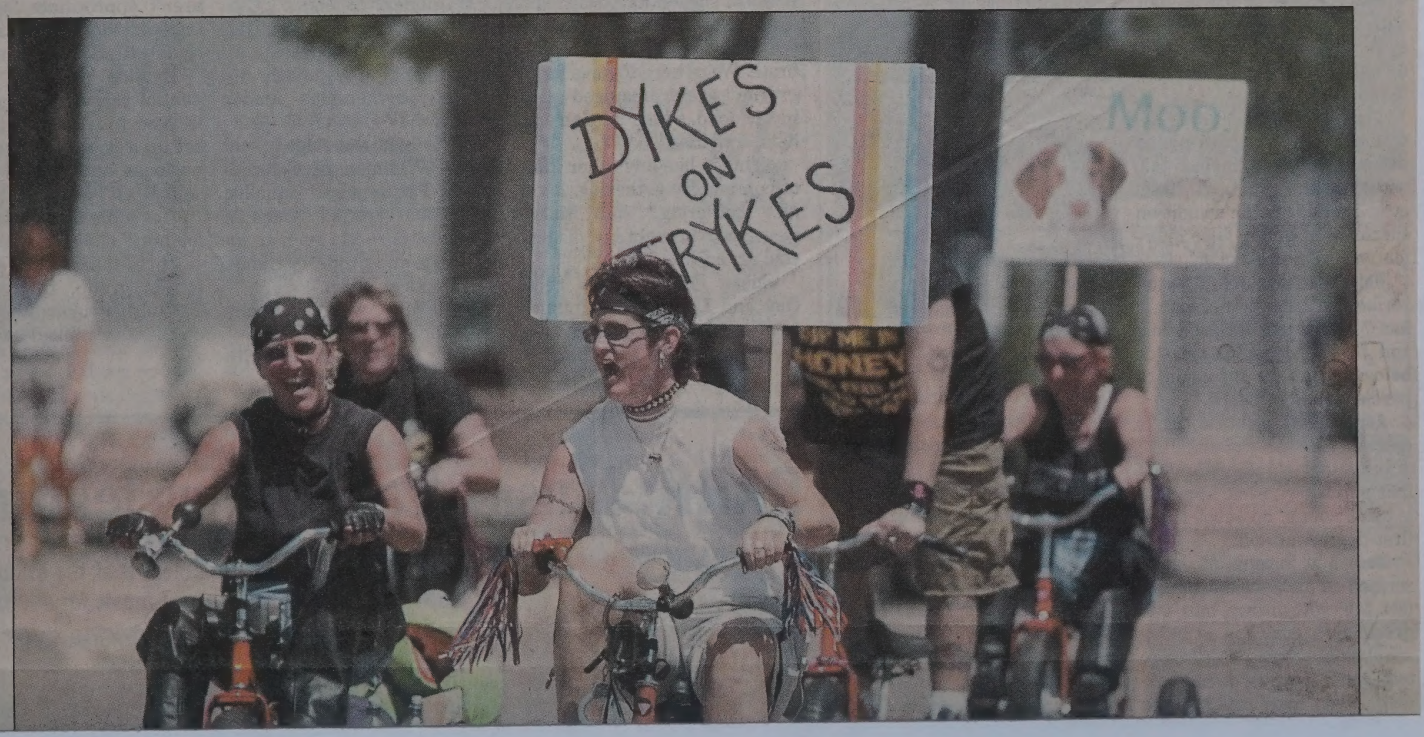
Koeshall said he'll decide whether to donate his stole after he sees the exhibit. He wears a new stole at Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, at least during traditional-style services Sunday mornings. The church is affiliated with a denomination that welcomes gay people.

Koeshall's new stole is broader and more decorative, featuring a rainbow pattern and large letters spelling the word "Rejoice."

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0187 or perry.swanson@gazette.com

"It's a day to show love for everybody."
DAN KIFER – PrideFest attendee

PRIDEFEST: 'A NICE GATHERING'



PRIDE: Commitment ceremony held at event

FROM PAGE 1

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Makepeace noted this when she addressed a crowd at Acacia Park as guest speaker at Sunday's rally.

"We need to get back to having mayors who sign proclamations for all people. That's my political speech for today," she said. "Now my mission is to tell you: We're here to celebrate. We're here to have fun."

The event featured live music, food, a beer garden and kids' activities.

"This is like any other kind of community gathering. It's a nice gathering," said Makepeace, who brought her diaper-clad grandson.

Susan Osorio, Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center event coordinator, said the crowd was the "biggest ever," exceeding last year's turnout of 8,000 people.

She said 100 vendor spaces sold out in advance.

About 20 couples, including two heterosexual pairs, took part in a mass commitment ceremony onstage.

Petitioners collected signatures for a citizens' ballot initiative that proposes an amendment to establish domestic partnerships under state law.

"It is not marriage," said Denise Whinnen of Coloradans for Fairness and Equality. "It is built around issues of economic fairness, such as inheritance and property rights. It protects children."

PrideFest was a family event for some people.

Chris Brobin marched with his two young sons and Unitarian Church members in the parade.

He wore his Cub Scout leader shirt — adorned with a rainbow patch.

"The Scouts have taken some anti-gay stances that aren't appropriate for Scouting, that don't have anything to do with Scouting," he said.

Randee Van Ness, a Prudential real estate agent who is new to Colorado Springs, set up a booth to support her business and her 16-year-old son.

"It's a big coming-out party for him," she said. "It's so sad — three-quarters of the kids in his group, their parents have either turned their backs on them or walked away from them."

Shelly Pigeon wore a pink "I Kiss Girls" shirt she made for the event.

"I spent the first 35 years being unhappy and not who I was," she said. "When I came out, I came out in a big way."

She brought her 11-year-old daughter, Zoe, to PrideFest for the first time — and the mother found she had some explaining to do.

"I had her asking why these people are holding up signs saying it's wrong, we're going to hell and all that stuff," Pigeon said.

Said Zoe: "I didn't think churches and stuff would be against people who are gay."

But that was a small part of the day.

"I've had a good time," Zoe said.

"We need to get back to having mayors who sign proclamations for all people."

MARY LOU MAKEPEACE – Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado director

BRADY'S CORNER
05 26 06
"UNDER MY 'GUEST WORKER' PROGRAM, IMMIGRANTS WON'T BE ILLEGAL ANYMORE, BUT THEY WON'T BE REAL CITIZENS EITHER... SORT OF LIKE GAY PEOPLE."

"It's a day to show love for everybody."
DAN KIFER – PrideFest attendee

PRIDEFEST: 'A NICE GATHERING'

PHOTOS BY KRISTIN GOODE, THE GAZETTE

From left, Julie Landon, Cassie Brown, Boo Gilligan, Tina VanSickle and others pedaled down Tejon Street on Sunday during the annual PrideFest Parade. Susan Osorio, Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center event coordinator, said more than 8,000 people attended PrideFest.

"Nuclia Waste" waved to the crowd Sunday at Pridefest. The downtown event featured live music, food, a beer garden and kids' activities.

POLITICS, WHIMSY MIX AT GAY FESTIVAL

By **ANDREA BROWN**
THE GAZETTE

Dan Kifer shouted "Moo."

Two men behind him yelled "Boo."

The "moos" outnumbered the "boos" at Sunday's 16th annual PrideFest, which drew a handful of protesters.

"It's a day to show love for everybody. There's too much hatred," said Kifer, holding a sign with a mooing dog meant to promote acceptance of gays.

Behind Kifer, two men waved "sins of homosexuality" signs, chanting religious verses between boos.

Norman, a mooing brown-and-white puppy appearing on signs throughout Colorado Springs, is the poster dog of the Born Different campaign that suggests gay people were born that way.

"It is to get people talking," said Mary Lou Makepeace, director of the Gay & Lesbian Fund for Colorado. "I think the time is right."

When Makepeace was mayor of Colorado Springs, she always signed a proclamation heralding the annual PrideFest — unlike

SEE **PRIDE** • PAGE 2

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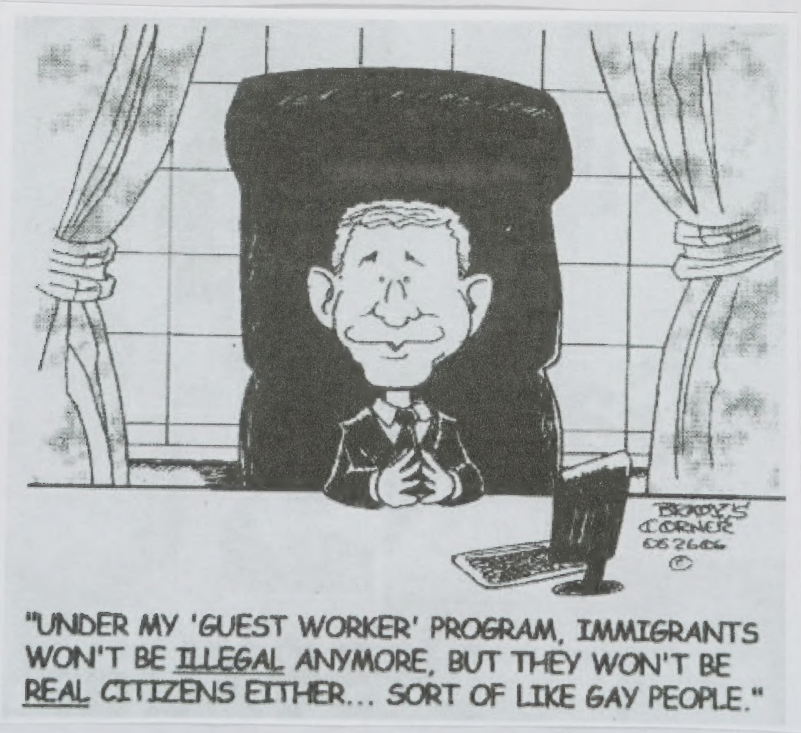
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Other voices

Mooing puppy campaign conceals second agenda

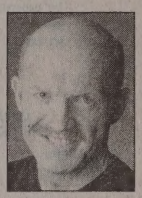
By BILL MAIER
FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

Evolutionary biologists from every corner of the world are heading to Colorado Springs. They're coming here to examine an amazing new species discovered right in our backyard: a dog that moos. It won't be long before photographers from the National Enquirer and the Weekly World News arrive as well. A mooing dog, after all, would sell a lot of papers.

But it also sells something else — at least as it's being presented in a Springs-centered ad campaign paid for by Denver's Gill Foundation, a gay advocacy organization. It sells a lie. Sure, it's a cute lie; everybody loves little wide-eyed puppies. But what the puppy on the billboards and lamp-post signs — not to mention the theater, TV, radio and newspaper ads — is selling is the notion that homosexuality is genetically determined, hardwired into us at birth like blue eyes or left-handedness. And that's about as rooted in reality as a dog that moos like a cow.

The truth is, no one is born gay. A variety of complex environmental, social and temperamental factors can coalesce into leading men and women to be attracted to the same sex. The process is different for every person, and it's certainly not a choice in the sense that a person wakes up one day and says, "You know, this is as good a morning as ever to be gay." But neither is there any credible scientific evidence that homosexuality is an inborn, immutable trait. In fact, in its "Fact Sheet on Gay Lesbian Bisexual Issues," the American Psychiatric Association clearly states: "to date there are no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology for homosexuality."

There's also no evidence that same-sex attraction is a fixed, unchangeable characteristic like race or ethnicity. If you're born black or Hispanic, you're gonna be black or Hispanic for the rest of your life. But thousands of men and women, including several friends of mine who work at Focus on the Family, have walked away from homosexuality after becoming dissatisfied with the lifestyle they were living. Many have gone on to marry someone of the opposite sex and have children — irrefutable evidence that people are no more born gay than dogs are born to make noises like cows.



Bill Maier

You also may have heard the Gill folks, as part of this mooing-dog business, pose this question to heterosexuals, "When did you decide to be straight?" The answer to that, of course, is that we didn't — that's the way we were made. We no more choose to be attracted to those of the opposite sex than we choose to have our hair grow. It just happens, for the vast majority of us — about 98 percent of Americans. And just like a complex array of circumstances can lead someone who is born heterosexual to be attracted to the same sex, a whole lot of factors can lead somebody's hair to stop growing — heredity, stress, advancing age. Trust me, I know.

The bottom line in all of this, of course, has nothing to do with dogs and cows and the noises they make. It's about the noise the Gill Foundation is making in its effort to change the definition of marriage in Colorado. The hope is that if you buy the notion that some dogs are just born to moo, you'll also buy their campaign to redefine marriage.

Every time one of the ads airs or one of the downtown banners is seen, it brings the foundation a step closer to its goals: Persuading you to reject a constitutional amendment that would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman; or, failing that, getting you to approve "domestic partnerships" for same-sex couples — a fancy phrase for what amounts to counterfeit marriage.

Simon LeVay, one of the nation's leading gay scientists, has stated that "people who think gays and lesbians are born that way are also more likely to support gay rights." That's why the Gill Foundation is spending a lot of money to convince us that homosexuality is inborn. We won't know until the Nov. 7 election whether their terribly cute, terribly misleading advertising campaign has succeeded. If it does, though, it will be a dog-gone shame for those of us who call Colorado home.

Maier is a child and family psychologist and serves as vice-president and psychologist in residence at Focus on the Family. He is co-author of "Marriage on Trial: The Case Against Same-Sex Marriage and Parenting."

GT 7/19/06

JERILEE BENNETT, THE GAZETTE

Sherman at the Focus on the Family Welcome Center on Tuesday, after a news conference announcing the "No Moo Lies" campaign, aimed against ads in Colorado Springs featuring a puppy that moos.

Focus counters mooing pup

Dog barks its argument against Born Different

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

Two pooches are the unlikely mascots for competing ideas in Colorado Springs over what makes a person gay.

First there was Norman, the puppy who says "moo" because he was born different, according to an ad campaign that started early last month. Organizers of the Born Different campaign say Norman is a metaphor for gay people, who they argue were born different and deserve acceptance.

Tuesday, a dog named Sherman launched a counter-campaign with a sharp "woof," a sound he makes because, his creators say, "that's what dogs do." A campaign featuring Sherman called "No Moo Lies" begins today with an advertisement in The Gazette.

The Colorado Springs-based Christian ministry Focus on the Family developed the No Moo Lies campaign to rebut the Born Different effort, which is funded by the Denver-based Gill Foundation.

"Dogs aren't born mooing, and people aren't born gay," Focus said in materials distributed to reporters at a news conference.

In the materials, Sherman is pictured as a real dog. At the Tuesday

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ONLINE >
In depth

The Web sites of competing media campaigns on whether people are born gay:

- www.borndifferent.org, sponsored by the Gill Foundation
- www.no-moo-lies.com, sponsored by Focus on the Family

INSIDE

The House says no to a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage.

Page 6

SHERMAN: Ballot initiatives also part of effort

FROM PAGE 1

event, he also was a person in a dog costume.

While organizers of the Born Different campaign said they want only to spark discussion, Focus on the Family said Born Different is really an effort to champion legal status for same-sex marriages.

Colorado voters will decide in the November election whether to change state law to grant the benefits of marriage to same-sex couples in domestic partnerships. Organizers are gathering petition signatures for three other ballot measures to change the Colorado Constitution, including one to ban any new legal status similar to marriage, one to define marriage as only the union of one man and one woman, and a third establishing domestic partnerships for same-sex couples. The last measure is similar to the one already on the ballot, except that it would change the constitution rather than merely state law.

The ballot initiative supporters have until Aug. 7 to submit the 67,829 petition signatures needed to qualify for the ballot.

Focus on the Family officials said the Born Different campaign is a veiled attempt to boost the measures recognizing same-sex unions.

"What we're talking about here is a radical redefinition of the human family," said Bill Maier, a Focus vice president and psychologist. "Same-sex marriage intentionally creates motherless or fatherless families."

Bobby Rauzon, a spokesman for the Born Different campaign, denied that it's tied to the ballot measures. He said he welcomes the Focus dog, Sherman, to the discussion.

"This is about two dogs, Norman and Sherman," Rauzon said. "It's about inviting the people of the Springs to really engage in a conversation about whether gay people are born gay. Colorado will face some political decisions, and voters will really need to sit down and weigh those issues. This is separate."

Focus on the Family said it's exploring various venues for its Sherman campaign, but on Tuesday had developed only a newspaper ad and a Web site. Both were modeled on the Born Different campaign's graphic designs. The Born Different campaign has appeared on television, in movie theaters, radio spots, yard signs, paper napkins and other media.

Focus spokesman Gary Schneeberger didn't reveal how much the ministry will spend on its campaign, but indicated it will be much less than the $900,000 grant the Gill Foundation gave for Born Different.

The Born Different campaign has focused only on Colorado Springs because of the city's reputation as a battleground over gay-rights issues, organizers said.

The No Moo Lies campaign initially will focus only on Colorado Springs as well, but

News

The dog says 'moo'

Springs is the target of a new public interest campaign

By Cate Terwilliger

As opposing groups work to sway voter opinion on same-sex unions, a puppy named Norman wants Colorado Springs residents to discuss a simpler question: Are people born gay?

The freckled visage and comical "moo" of the 10-week-old Brittany spaniel is popping up on local billboards, buses and street posts, and in theaters. Norman also stars in radio and television spots.

into an overview of homosexuality in other animals and in humans. The Web site's narrative makes the campaign's premise explicit: "You can't change the way you were born. If you disagree, ask yourself this one simple question: When did you choose to be straight?"

Born Different creators tested the concept earlier this year, says Doug Allenstein, an executive producer with Public Interest.

"We met with people in Colorado Springs and asked them, 'What do you think of this question? Is the Springs receptive to having a conversation like this?' And people from all walks of life and all across the political spectrum agreed it was the right time to try to talk about this."

The campaign targets neither religious fundamentalists nor gay-rights activists, but a "fat middle zone" of heterosexuals who have never seriously considered the nature of sexual orientation.

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POOCH CAFÉ By Paul Gilligan

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The No Moo Lies campaign initially will focus only on Colorado Springs as well, but Focus officials said they might consider expanding it elsewhere.

The No Moo Lies campaign disputes Born Different on several points, including an assertion on the Born Different Web site that a person cannot change his or her sexual orientation. Melissa Fryrear, a gender issues analyst for Focus, said she's proof that's wrong.

"I used to be someone who was lesbian-identified," Fryrear said. "I know firsthand that people are not born gay, and homosexuality can be overcome."

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0187 or perry.swanson@gazette.com

News

The dog says 'moo'

Springs is the target of a new public interest campaign

By Cate Terwilliger

As opposing groups work to sway voter opinion on same-sex unions, a puppy named Norman wants Colorado Springs residents to discuss a simpler question: Are people born gay?

The freckled visage and comical "moo" of the 10-week-old Brittany spaniel is popping up on local billboards, buses and street posts, and in theaters. Norman also stars in radio and television spots.

Moos to you: Norman is the face of the "Born Different" campaign.

He's the face of an unusual effort launched exclusively in the Springs last month by the Emmy-award winning Public Interest, the nation's leading nonprofit creator of social-awareness campaigns.

Filmed locally, the "Born Different" campaign tells the story of Norman, who differs from his littermates in one way: He moos. Five 30-second television spots trace the floppy-eared protagonist's journey from pariah pup through reparative therapy (a bulldog vainly tries to teach Norman to bark) to adored adoptee of a woman who rescues him from the pound.

"Obviously, Norman is a metaphor," says campaign spokesman Bobby Rauzon. "Too often, these types of discussions [about homosexuality] are overcome by political agendas, or it becomes an issue of marriage or religion ... We're interested in having people think of this in personal terms."

The spots reference borndifferent.org, which expands Norman's story into an overview of homosexuality in other animals and in humans. The Web site's narrative makes the campaign's premise explicit: "You can't change the way you were born. If you disagree, ask yourself this one simple question: When did you choose to be straight?"

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Norman's softly humorous story presents "a very easygoing conversation starter," Allenstein says. "Our hope is that people would be sitting around a card game or having lunch with friends, and someone might just bring it up, and folks would talk about it."

The $900,000 campaign, which ends in August, is funded through a grant from the pro-gay, Denver-based Gill Foundation. It targets Colorado Springs because of the city's history as a battleground in the gay-rights movement.

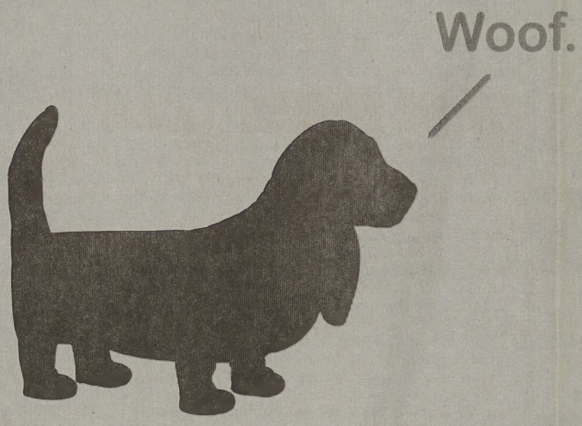
Yet Allenstein calls the timing of the campaign — which coincides with efforts to land competing same-sex union measures on the state's fall ballot — "unfortunate."

"It just flat-out doesn't have anything to do with anything legislative or political," he says. "The impetus was simply to try a creative approach to delivering a message and beginning a dialogue in a community.

"There isn't anything to debate, or anything to fight. ... Norman is a good, wholesome dog with a very easy message to deliver."

— newsroom@csindy.com

POOCH CAFÉ By Paul Gilligan



No-Moo-Lies.com

MIDDLE EAST

Evacuees asked to repay U.S.

Politicians feud as Americans are rescued from Lebanon

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON • As U.S. citizens scrambled to escape the fighting in Lebanon and the Pentagon announced a massive evacuation effort, another kind of war — this one bitterly political — broke out in Washington over whether the evacuees should be billed for the costs of their own rescue.

They were being asked to sign a promissory note, pledging to repay the U.S. government within 90 days for the costs of their evacuation. The paperwork in Beirut sent tempers through the roof in Washington, not to mention among some under fire in Lebanon who have been asked to sign the notes.

"We've spent hundreds of billions of dollars in Iraq, we've paid Halliburton money that they haven't even earned, and yet we charge individual Americans who are caught in the crossfire in Lebanon for their transportation costs to get out," said an outraged House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Calling on President Bush to reassure the public that "this is not just another manifestation of the Katrina mentality," Pelosi added: "A nation that can provide $300 billion for a war in Iraq can provide the money to get its people out of Lebanon."

At the White House, press secretary Tony Snow blamed Congress for a 2003 mandate requiring the administration to recover evacuation costs "to the maximum extent practicable." The provision, he said, "is causing heartburn for a number of people, but it is the law, and the State Department has to abide by it."

Throughout the day, congressional leaders and the administration traded accusations over who was to blame, and each urged the other to rush through a waiver to the law requiring repayment. By Tuesday evening, according to congressional aides, the State Department indicated that evacuees would not be charged.

The Pentagon, meanwhile, announced that it was sending nine U.S. Navy ships — six already in the region and three from Europe — and thousands of Marines and sailors to aid in the rescue and provide security.

Four of the ships are amphibious vessels that can hold more than 1,000 people each. Helicopters and landing craft from those ships will be used to bring people from the port to the vessels, which will remain well offshore to stay out of harm's way.

In addition, he said, the Navy is contracting with commercial vessels.

The increased capability means that as of today, "we will see a dramatic ramp-up" in the number of American evacuees, said the assistant secretary of State for consular affairs, Maura Harty.

In addition, she said, the administration is now ready to begin evacuating Americans from southern Lebanon as well as from Beirut.

There are about 25,000 U.S. citizens in Lebanon, according to government estimates. The State Department is unsure how many want to leave but made clear that all who want to will be evacuated.

The State Department has been authorized to seek reimbursement for rescues since 1956, according to the State Department.

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DEVELOPMENTS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

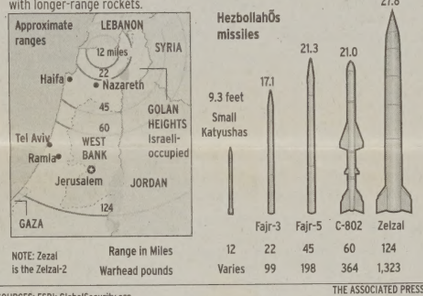
Israeli soldiers fired heavy artillery Tuesday at targets in southern Lebanon from a position near Kiryat Shemona, in northern Israel, next to the Lebanese border. Israeli officials on Tuesday said their military offensive in Lebanon could last several more weeks.

- Israel said Tuesday its offensive in Lebanon could last several more weeks and involve large numbers of ground forces. Early today the Israeli military said small number of troops entered southern Lebanon searching for tunnels and mines.
- The deaths from a week of fighting rose to 237 in Lebanon and 25 in Israel. The United Nations estimated 500,000 people have been displaced.
- Israel struck a Lebanese army base outside Beirut on Tuesday, killing 11 soldiers and wounding 35, the Lebanese military said. The base is adjacent to Hezbollah strongholds often targeted by recent Israeli strikes.
- Nine members of the same family were killed when a bomb hit their house Tuesday in Aitaroun, near the border with Israel, Lebanon's state-run news agency said, citing police.
- Hezbollah fired at least 100 rockets into Israel on Tuesday, hitting a string of towns and the city of Haifa. One man was killed in Nahariya.
- Military helicopters ferried 120 Americans from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut on Tuesday, and 200 more left on a ship chartered by Sweden to rush out nearly 1,000 Europeans.
- The United Nations said Tuesday it is evacuating all nonessential staff from Beirut.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

HezbollahÕs reach

The majority of HezbollahÕs arsenal is made up of short-range inaccurate rockets, but for more than a decade Iran is believed to have supplied them with longer-range rockets.



NOTE: Zezal is the Zelzal-2	Range in Miles	12	22	45	60	124
	Warhead pounds	Varies	99	198	364	1,323

SOURCES: ESRI; GlobalSecurity.org

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Israel taking out Hezbollah arsenal

Airstrikes aimed at missiles

LOS ANGELES TIMES

JERUSALEM • With the air war over Lebanon entering its second week, Israeli commanders believe they have been able to significantly reduce Hezbollah's military power, but they plan to continue a campaign that has been running at more than 300 combat sorties a day.

Officials in Jerusalem acknowledge that international pressure for a diplomatic solution will eventually choke off their offensive. But they have made clear they hope to continue until they have destroyed more of Hezbollah's missiles and the group's ability to launch them.

"Overall, knock on wood, there have been fewer rockets" fired at Israeli towns and cities, Maj. Gen. Udi Adam, the chief of Israel's northern command, told Israel's Channel One Tuesday. "I think we should assume that it will take a few more weeks" to complete the job, he said.

The air campaign has three prongs, military analysts say.

In south Lebanon, the goal is to undermine Hezbollah's ability to launch rockets against towns and cities in northern Israel.

At the start of the fighting, Israeli analysts estimated that Hezbollah had 10,000 Katyusha rockets and a smaller store of sophisticated, longer-range missiles from Syria and Iran. Many of the rockets are positioned in densely populated neighborhoods, sometimes cached in homes, officials here say.

Israeli strategists believe the round-the-clock airstrikes have destroyed about one-third of the long-range missiles, according to news reports here citing military intelligence sources.

The same reports suggested, however, that the offensive will not be considered a success unless it makes a deeper dent in Hezbollah's arsenal — taking more than 60 percent of the rockets out of commission.

Beyond the rockets, Israel has two other goals.

In the eastern Bekaa Valley, which Israeli officials have described as a prime route for smuggling arms from Syria, Israel is seeking to destroy Hezbollah's logistical network.

Tuesday, an Israeli air raid targeted a road in Lebanon and blew up a convoy of trucks carrying arms bound for Hezbollah that was being moved in from Syria, an Israeli intelligence official said.

In south Beirut, the chief targets are the symbols of Hezbollah's power.

"The army is acting on all three of these levels with increasing force," wrote Alex Fishman, the military-affairs correspondent for Israel's Yediot Aharonot.

In pressing its air campaign, Israel is prosecuting the war on its own terms — but faces a formidable adversary and a constrained timetable.

A poll published Tuesday in Yediot indicated that 86 percent of the Israeli public believes the wide-ranging assaults against Lebanon have been an appropriate response to Hezbollah's actions.

Outside of Israel, however, criticism has mounted rapidly over the rising civilian death toll in Lebanon, approaching 250 as the fighting ended a seventh day, and the devastation of Lebanon's infrastructure.

Importantly, however, the Bush administration — Israel's main ally — so far has taken no steps to rein in the attacks.

Israeli officials say they are taking all possible measures to avoid killing and maiming innocents.

For first time, militias wage largely air war against Israel

THE WASHINGTON POST

JERUSALEM • Israel and the radical Islamic groups Hamas and Hezbollah are waging war for the first time largely in the skies, exchanging rocket fire, artillery rounds and airstrikes in battles that military officials and analysts here say could redefine the regional conflict for years to come.

Both militias are now drawing on longer-range arsenals to send missiles deeper into Israel. The launch sites are hard to detect, and the short-range rockets reach targets in seconds, making interception nearly impossible.

Israel dominated air power in earlier years but now faces a fresh challenge from the crude rockets that Hezbollah and Hamas are using to strike Israeli cities. The war of the missiles could also render less relevant the large-scale ground operations that the Israeli military relied on in the past.

Israel's withdrawal from Gaza last year and southern Lebanon in 2000 has deprived Hamas and Hezbollah of targets they once hit regularly: army posts, settlers and soldiers.

"Israel has long ruled the skies," said Michael Oren, a senior fellow at the Shalem Center, an academic research organization in Jerusalem and the author of "Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East," a chronicle of the 1967 Middle East War. "Since they can't shoot down the airplanes, these groups have developed a way to try to rule the skies themselves with missiles. And our ability to stop missiles is very limited."

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GT 7/20/06

"We're Christians, and it's important for us to show people God has created this beautiful family."

CINDY SOLOMON – marching with Soulforce

MARK REIS, THE GAZETTE

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Soulforce marches on Focus

Gay-rights activists trek from Denver to deliver message to Dobson

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

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SOULFORCE: Gay parents not treated equally, woman says

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Colorado Springs residents Cindy Solomon and Shari Klebba joined the march Wednesday with their daughter, 2-year-old Samantha Solomon-Klebba. Religious faith was a main reason behind the decision to join the march, Solomon said.

"We're Christians, and it's important for us to show people God has created this beautiful family," she said.

Solomon and Klebba have been together 11 years. They were granted a civil union in Vermont in 2000, they said, and were legally married in Canada a year ago.

Klebba is the adoptive mother of the couple's daughter, and Solomon was recently awarded the status of her legal guardian, she said. Being a legal guardian involves making an annual report to a judge, Solomon said.

"That's very, very irksome," she said.

"It's just another indication that in this country gay parents are not considered equal to straight parents," Klebba said.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0187 or perry.swanson@gazette.com

Gay chutzpah!

Regarding "The dog says 'moo'" [News, July 13]:

Now they've done it. The Gay and Lesbian Fund, backed by the Gill Foundation, has amused the public with advertising containing mooing dogs, allegedly trying to stimulate discussions over whether homosexuality is partly or wholly genetic and fixed from birth. Or is it a learned and conditioned behavior and a free choice?

Thank goodness our alert friends at Focus on the Family instantly saw through this ruse. After all, the Gill Foundation is that group that funds so many civic and charitable efforts in Colorado, including support for gays.

But the experts at Focus were not fooled. Not for a moment. They saw this as another attempt by those wily gays to advance the dreaded "gay agenda." The crafty lesbians are trying to get equal benefits in the workplace. And the stealthy bisexuals want the right to adopt children, like everyone else. And those cunning transsexuals want equal rights to sue if they are illegally fired. Some nerve.

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— Larimore Nicholl
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Dangerous minds

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People may even be moved to talk, and perhaps discuss the fact that some people are born with a preference for members of their own gender. Acknowledgement of this fact will inevitably lead to the destruction of marriage between people of different genders, and ultimately, the downfall of Western society.

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About 20 gay-rights activists marched for miles under a hot sun Wednesday, bound for a Saturday rally at the Colorado Springs headquarters of the Christian ministry Focus on the Family.

The marchers, part of the gay-rights group Soulforce, criticized Focus as a leading voice in opposition to gay marriage and rights for gay parents. Focus founder James Dobson was a particular target — he has called gay marriage and parents a threat to traditional families.

Marcher Jami Armstrong wore a sign on her back that read "Mr. Dobson," and her partner Kelly Shinn had a sign continuing the statement: "Who can argue with love?"

Armstrong and Shinn, both social workers from the Denver area, have been together nearly four years. Shinn said Focus and Dobson damage "marginalized" people, including gays.

"He's representing this movement, he's leading this movement, and people need to be held accountable for their actions or lack of action," she said.

The Soulforce 1,000 Watt March began Monday in Denver and culminates Saturday with a demonstration and concert outside the Focus on the Family headquarters off Briargate Parkway. Soulforce argues that Focus commits "spiritual violence" against gays.

Bill Maier, a Focus vice president and psychologist, said Soulforce and other pro-gay groups falsely portray the ministry's position. Maier said the ministry acknowledges that gay people can form loving relationships, love their children and deserve respect and dignity. He said the debate over gay marriage and families should explore other questions.

"It is about whether men and women complement and complete each other in their differences," Maier said. "It's about whether mothers and fathers play unique and irreplaceable roles in the lives of their children precisely because of their gender."

The Soulforce march along Colo-

SEE **SOULFORCE** • PAGE 2

SOULFORCE: Gay parents not treated equally, woman says

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GT 7/23/06

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March, Vigil, & Concert
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The last segment is expected to be led by actor Chad Allen and activist Judy Shepard, mother of Matthew Shepard — a gay man who was murdered because of his sexuality.

The protest will conclude with a jazz concert by Broadway musician Billy Porter.

Easy access

By Cate Terwilliger

Colorado voters facing multiple ballot measures concerning same-sex unions might be forgiven for asking, "What the heck is going on here?"

The answer lies in the state's easy-access ballot.

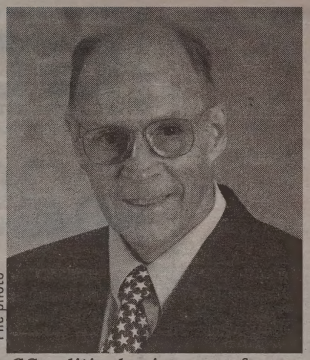
"National interests in some cases, state interests in others, have figured out you can bypass the legislature by finding one of the states that has the initiative, the referendum and the recall," says Colorado College political science professor Bob Loevy.

Colorado requires relatively few valid signatures — just 5 percent of votes cast for the office of secretary of state in the previous general election — to place an initiative on the ballot. This year, that amounts to 67,829 registered voters.

Use of the initiative in Colorado began increasing in the late 1980s, when social issues replaced economics as the main distinction between the Democratic and Republican parties, Loevy says. It was further popularized by a 1988 U.S. Supreme Court decision invalidating Colorado's ban on paid signature-gatherers.

"Whatever your pet social or economic project, one way to not only get it established but get it put in the state constitution … is by raising some money or taking money of your own and paying people to get the signatures to get your issue on the ballot," Loevy says. "Initiated ballot issues are written by whoever has the money to pay the signature-gatherers, and they write it in ways that suit them, not the general public."

The result is a form of one-group or one-man rule that hijacks the legislative process, Loevy says. And when the possible outcome is a change not to state law but to the state constitution, that's disturbing.



File photo

CC political science professor Bob Loevy.

"Constitutions are not supposed to be where you put things that temporary majorities support," he says. "The big problem is that it's turning the constitution — which should be based on the major governing principles of our society — into legislation."

Groups who employ initiatives often cite unresponsive legislators or "activist judges," a term currently in vogue with conservatives unhappy about court decisions favoring same-sex couples.

In a statement following the recent Senate defeat of the federal Marriage Protection Amendment, Focus on the Family founder James Dobson vowed to protect marriage "from renegade judges." In 2004, he blasted "the imperious judiciary" and a "tyrannical judiciary" for decisions that favored same-sex couples.

Bishop Phillip Porter uses the phrase "activist judges" no fewer than three times in a statement explaining the need for Initiative 83, which proposes a constitutional amendment reiterating Colorado's one-man, one-woman statutory definition of marriage.

"We find too many judges making new laws," Porter says. "Judges are historically chosen to carry out the will of the people as the people have expressed it."

Actually, that's the role of the legislature. Judges are charged with determining the constitutionality of laws to ensure that the will of the majority does not needlessly trample the rights of the minority, which it frequently has.

"Having a constitutional framework that was interpreted and applied by the judiciary was meant to limit majority rule or straight democracy," says attorney Brad Sears, executive director of the Williams Institute on Sexual Orientation Law and Public Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"To say now that these are 'activist' judges because they're making these decisions and we have to follow them — well, that's exactly their role," Sears explains. "We wouldn't need them to be protected and appointed for life if they were just making decisions everyone liked."

In modern times, the "activist" label has been pinned to judges whose decisions banned school segregation, permitted abortion, protected flag-burning as a form of political expression, and allowed interracial marriage.

In the key interracial marriage case, *Loving v. Virginia* (1967), the Supreme Court affirmed that the freedom to marry is "one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness by free men." The opinion declared anti-miscegenation laws unconstitutional after the state failed to establish a legitimate purpose "independent of invidious racial discrimination."

Although the Loving court did not consider same-sex marriage, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court cited the case in its 2003 decision permitting gay couples to marry.

"The right to marry means little if it does not include the right to marry the person of one's choice, subject to appropriate government restrictions in the interests of public health, safety, and welfare," the court wrote in *Goodridge v. Department of Public Health*. "In this case, as in Loving, a statute deprives individuals of access to an institution of fundamental legal, personal, and social significance — the institution of marriage — because of a single trait: skin color in Loving, sexual orientation here.

"As it did in Loving, history must yield to a more fully developed understanding of the

continued on pg. 21 →

broadcast last fall, Dobson predicted not only group marriage but the possibility of marriage between "daddies and little girls" and "a man and his donkey.")

Yet precedent established in *Reynolds* expressly forbids "plural marriages."

"Precedent is very important — the idea of *stare decisis*, that there should be controlling principles that last over time and prevent courts from acting arbitrarily," says New England School of Law professor Law-

status of equality.

"The message of America is, 'Deal me in.' Everyone wants to be dealt in on equality and fair treatment. … [Gays] are just right in line."

They've come closest in Massachusetts, where same-sex couples marry, and life goes on.

"Here in the commonwealth, we have discovered the sky has not fallen and things have not changed," Friedman says. "It does not affect most of our lives at all." ❐

source. Focus on the Family's Web site, for instance, presents "solid research" on same-sex marriage and parenting — written largely by a Focus analyst. Supporters of domestic partnerships may employ material generated by the Human Rights Campaign or other pro-gay groups.

But the unbiased truth is out there. To help you find it, the *Indy* recommends the following Web sites:

childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_gay/f_gay.cfm

Stateline.org: Tracker of state policy innovations and trends.
stateline.org (under "Social Policy")

Wikipedia: An overview of same-sex marriage movement.
enwikipedia.org/wiki/same-sex-marriage

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VIEW A SLIDESHOW OF CHRISTY AND KURT'S WEDDING AT WWW.CAYTONPHOTOGRAPHY.COM/BLOG/

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→ *continued from pg. 19*

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While acknowledging "deep-seated religious, moral and ethical" objections to same-sex marriage, the court held that Massachusetts, like Virginia in the '60s, had not provided a "constitutionally adequate" defense of its marriage policy.

"Our obligation is to define the liberty of all, not to mandate our own moral code," the court wrote.

By contrast, judges have consistently upheld bans on another form of marriage — polygamy — beginning with *Reynolds v. U.S.* (1878).

The specter of polygamous marriage is frequently raised by gay-rights opponents who warn that legalizing same-sex marriage will open a Pandora's box of non-traditional unions. (In a radio broadcast last fall, Dobson predicted not only group marriage but the possibility of marriage between "daddies and little girls" and "a man and his donkey.")

Yet precedent established in *Reynolds* expressly forbids "plural marriages."

"Precedent is very important — the idea of *stare decisis*, that there should be controlling principles that last over time and prevent courts from acting arbitrarily," says New England School of Law professor Lawrence Friedman. "There is no precedent anywhere that suggests anyone views marriage as anything other than a binary relationship.

"It seems reasonable to the courts that, when you get beyond binary marriage, there's a possibility that coercion is involved, and that some people are not entering it willingly. The same reasoning applies with people under the legal age of consent."

"Constitutions are not supposed to be where you put things that temporary majorities support."

— Bob Loevy, Colorado College political science professor

By contrast, same-sex marriage is destined to join a long list of social movements toward equality, Loevy says.

"Thomas Jefferson let the cat out of the bag when he said all men are created equal," he says. "If you look back over American history, there have been setbacks, but there's a progressive movement to add more and more groups to what we call a status of equality.

"The message of America is, 'Deal me in.' Everyone wants to be dealt in on equality and fair treatment. … [Gays] are just right in line."

They've come closest in Massachusetts, where same-sex couples marry, and life goes on.

"Here in the commonwealth, we have discovered the sky has not fallen and things have not changed," Friedman says. "It does not affect most of our lives at all." ❐

The truth is out there

Colorado voters who endured the Amendment 2 campaign know the coming debate over domestic partnerships is apt to get nasty. But a mean-spirited campaign can backfire.

"You have to be careful, because sometimes you defeat your own goal," says Boulder attorney Jean Dubofsky, who argued against the anti-gay initiative before the Supreme Court.

"One of the ways we won was by giving the court copies of the newsprint distributed to every house in the state the night before the election," she explains. "It contained all sorts of incredibly awful things about gays and lesbians, the same kinds of things that used to be written about blacks or Jews. We used that to prove that the only purpose of the initiative was an impermissible one, to promote bias.

"Whenever you start using materials that are demonstrably false, you run a risk of having what you're pushing being declared unconstitutional. "

In assessing the veracity of this year's campaigns, voters should consider the source. Focus on the Family's Web site, for instance, presents "solid research" on same-sex marriage and parenting — written largely by a Focus analyst. Supporters of domestic partnerships may employ material generated by the Human Rights Campaign or other pro-gay groups.

But the unbiased truth is out there. To help you find it, the *Indy* recommends the following Web sites:

Goodridge: The 2003 case that gave gay couples in Massachusetts the right to marry. masslaw.com/signup/opinion.cfm?page=ma/opin/sup/1017603.htm

Loving: The 1967 case that ruled interracial marriage bans unconstitutional. caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=388&invol=1

Colorado overview: An issues brief on same-sex unions, by the Colorado Legislative Council Staff. state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/lcsstaff/Scrollpages/IssueScroll2006.htm

Colorado same-sex couples: Demographic and economic analysis of Colorado couples based on 2000 Census data. law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/press/PressReleases/ColoradoSameSexCouples.html

Gay and lesbian adoptive parents: From The Children's Bureau, a subdivision of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. childwelfare.gov/pubs/f_gay/f_gay.cfm

Stateline.org: Tracker of state policy innovations and trends. stateline.org (under "Social Policy")

Wikipedia: An overview of same-sex marriage movement. enwikipedia.org/wiki/same-sex-marriage

— Cate Terwilliger

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Colorado constitution, concerning marriage, and, in connection therewith, specifying that only a union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Colorado?

Proponents: Bishop Phillip Porter, founder of All Nations Pentecostal Center Church of God in Christ, Aurora; Ruben Mendez, associate pastor of Faith Bible Chapel, Arvada

Implications: Reiterates Colorado's statutory definition of marriage as a union between one man and one woman.

Coloradans for Marriage: marriageforcolorado.com/index.jsp

Bishop Phillip Porter says an amendment to the Colorado constitution reiterating existing marriage law is necessary because the law is a legislative item and "not the people's voice." A constitutional amendment, he says, will protect marriage from "activist" judges.

Porter is a prominent black pastor and president of Coloradans for Marriage; he recently appeared with Dobson on a radio broadcast dedicated to the proposed marriage amendment.

It's a natural alliance, given the traditional view of marriage shared by the men.

Focus declares marriage to be "a sacred union, ordained by God to be a life-long, sexually exclusive relationship between one man and one woman" and opposes any legal sanction of "marriage counterfeits," a term it applies to same-sex couples, cohabiting couples and any other non-marital relationship.

Porter is chairman emeritus of Promise Keepers, an evangelical men's movement whose take on marriage stresses male responsibility — and authority.

"The husband is called the head of the family, the head of the wife," the father of eight told a 1996 Promise Keepers gathering in Denver. "God created it that way. That means for the working out of the marriage, the husband has been given authority in every area."

If this authority is exercised with the proper love and respect, Porter told the men, wives will feel satisfied, loved and more able to "devote themselves to our attention and the attention of our children."

Porter's confidence in the biblical approach to marriage isn't supported by divorce statistics. According to a 2004 study done by The Barna Group, a Christian research organization, born-again Christians are just as likely to divorce as non-Christians. Among the largest Protestant denominations, Pentecostals had the highest divorce rate.

Still, Porter's definition of marriage and family does not countenance same-sex couples and their children. "Those families, those children, are a misnomer," he says. "They should never have been … They didn't beget them [as a couple]."

Married couples with non-begotten children, those either adopted or from previous unions, are different, Porter says, because "they have done it correctly" — in accordance with the one-man, one-woman model put forth in Genesis.

Referendum H

Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado Revised Statutes to authorize domestic partnerships and, in connection therewith, enacting the "Colorado Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act" to extend to same-sex couples in a domestic partnership the benefits, protections and responsibilities that are granted by Colorado law to spouses, providing the conditions under which a license for a domestic partnership may be issued and the criteria under which a domestic partnership may be dissolved, making provisions for implementation of the act and providing that a domestic partnership is not a marriage, which consists of the union of one man and one woman?

Proponents: Approved by a 38-27 vote in the House; "yea" votes included 34 Democrats and four Republicans. Passed by a 19-16 vote in the Senate; "yea" votes included 18 Democrats and one Republican.

Implications: Authorizes same-sex domestic partnerships.

Full text: leg.state.co.us/lcs/0506initrefr.nsf/webview?openview&Count=30 (Scroll down to Referendum H.)

"Marriage is this universally recognized concept with a whole host of benefits attendant upon it, including provisions of federal law."

— Pat Steadman, Coloradans for Fairness and Equality

As a referred bill (HB 1344), The Colorado Domestic Partnership Benefits and Responsibilities Act is the only measure assured a place on the 2006 ballot. Unlike the initiatives, the referendum changes state law, not the constitution.

The act's language extends to same-sex couples the benefits, protections and responsibilities afforded by Colorado law to spouses "consistent with the principles of equality under law and religious freedom embodied in both the United States Constitution and the constitution of this state."

Exceptions include adoption, in that the act allows child-placement agencies with religious objections to refuse to place a child with domestic partners; and an exclusion of domestic partners from the filing of joint state tax returns.

Initiative 109

Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution prohibiting the creation or recognition by the state or its political subdivisions of a legal status similar to that of marriage, as described in the "Uniform Marriage Act" in the 2005 version of the Colorado Revised Statutes?

Proponents: Will Perkins; Rep. Kevin Lundberg (R-Berthoud)

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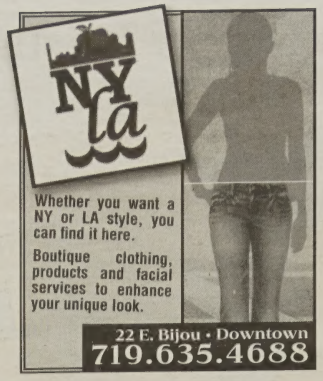
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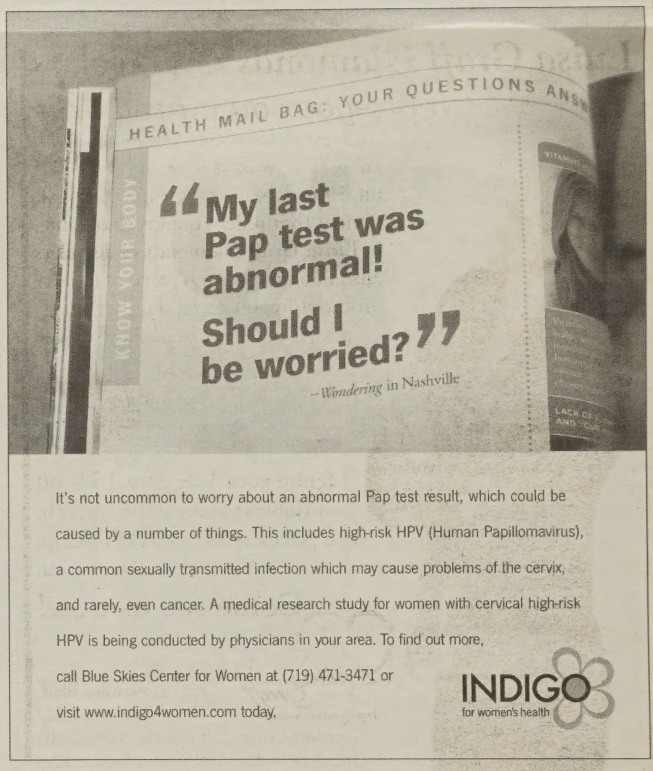
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→ continued from pg. 17

Implications: Aimed at nullifying domestic partnerships. Could threaten existing domestic-partner benefits (including medical and dental insurance) at state entities such as the University of Colorado.
Protecting Colorado Children: protectingcoloradochildren.org

Will Perkins, who in 1992 led a successful campaign to pass Amendment 2, sees the battle over same-sex marriage as a continuation of a campaign by homosexuals to win minority status.

"What we're seeing now, we talked about 14 years ago," Perkins says. "People now can realize that we talked about marriage, we talked about minority status, we talked about all of those things that were involved in Amendment 2. We anticipated [the push for same-sex marriage rights]."

In Perkins' mind, the "minority status" argument goes like this: Marriage confers preferential treatment, as does minority status. Hence, gays hope to achieve minority status by winning the right to marriage or marriage-like arrangements, including domestic partnerships.

Minority status translates into protection that, among other concerns, would give gays expanded power to influence school curricula, according to Perkins, who says his prime concern is protecting children.

"The state gives marital benefits because it benefits from marriage, it benefits from the fact that the [one-man, one-woman] family is the best environment to raise children …

"In protecting children, you need to protect the structure of the nuclear family … that is the main issue involved."

Research, however, contradicts the view that children should not be raised by same-sex parents. An American Psychological Association research summary published in 2004 found that same-sex couples are similar to married couples in their approach to parenting, and that their children are similar in significant developmental areas, including mental health, social adjustment and formation of sexual identity.

"Beliefs that gay and lesbian adults are not fit parents … have no empirical foundation," the report said. A fact sheet published in 2000 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reached the same conclusion.

"What we're seeing now, we talked about 14 years ago."

— Will Perkins, Initiative 109 proponent

Initiative 139

Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning the establishment of domestic partnerships and, in connection therewith, declaring that domestic partnerships do not affect the institution of marriage between one man and one woman, stating that notwithstanding any other provision of law a domestic partnership is established as a unique and valid relationship between eligible adults of the same sex and is not similar to marriage, and directing the general assembly to enact implementing legislation consistent with the responsibilities, benefits, and protections and licensing provisions for domestic partnerships set forth in House Bill 06-1344 as passed by the Colorado general assembly?

Proponents: Coloradans for Fairness and Equality
Implications: Counters the language of Initiative 109 by declaring domestic partnerships not similar to marriage.
Coloradans for Fairness and Equality: fairnessandequality.org

"Initiative 139 came about to protect our investment in HB 1344," says Denver attorney and lobbyist Pat Steadman, who represents Coloradans for Fairness and Equality.

In response to Initiative 109, Initiative 139 uses the same "similar … to marriage" language, though it's nonsensical to argue that a measure conferring most of the benefits and responsibilities of spouses on same-sex partners does not create a legal status similar to marriage.

Steadman explains it like this: "We are trying to create some record during the course of this election campaign to help guide those so-called activist judges … if they would ever be called on to interpret 'similar to marriage.' It is a vague, nebulous, loosey-goosey legal standard up for grabs … So we are all taking positions on it during the campaign."

He notes important differences between the proposed domestic partnerships and marriage, including the religious exemption for adoption agencies and exclusion from joint state tax returns. Nor will the measure affect the *persona non grata* status of same-sex couples in the eyes of the federal government.

"Marriage is this universally recognized concept with a whole host of benefits attendant upon it, including provisions of federal law," Steadman notes. "Colorado [same-sex] couples will not enjoy those."

That said, domestic partnerships would, in one swoop, confer many of the benefits and responsibilities of marriage, including inheritance rights and the primary authority to make medical decisions for an incapacitated mate. While some of these benefits can be patched together with separate legal documents, others cannot, Steadman says — including the ability to collect worker's compensation survivor benefits and to adopt children as a couple.

Under current Colorado law, only one partner of a gay couple with children has legal standing as a parent. (An analysis of 2000 Census data estimates that almost 6,000 Colorado children were being raised by same-sex couples in 1999.)

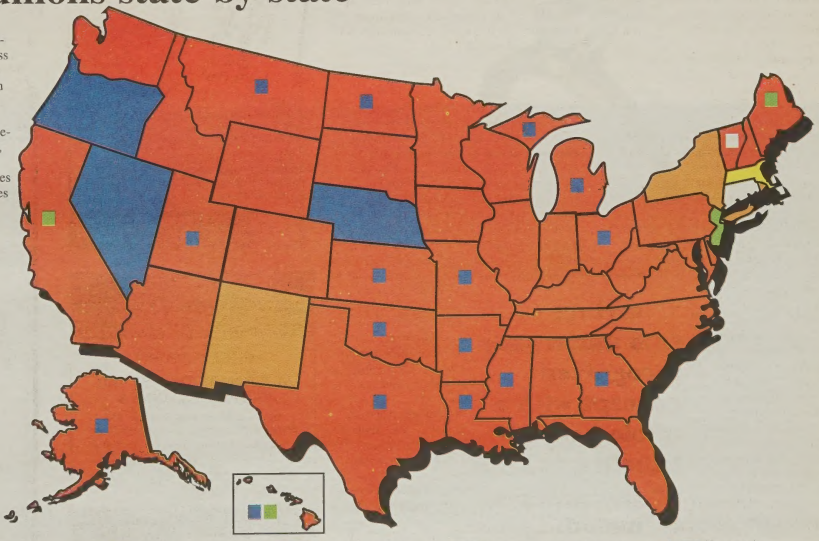
"One of them [the biological or adopting parent] has parental rights and responsibilities, and the other person can bail," Steadman says. "If we create domestic partnerships, children of gay couples are some of the big winners. They will have economic security, greater access to health care, protection through pensions, Social Security and child support. …

"Mr. Perkins is condemning these children to always being a child of a single parent, when there are two people who have made a commitment to that child in the first instance, and only one person the law can bind to that commitment." ❐

Same-sex unions state by state

The legal status of same-sex relationships is in constant flux; at press time, New York's high court was expected to rule on gay marriage in that state.

In this map, different colors represent different policies; for instance, red states have a law prohibiting same-sex marriage, while blue states have a constitutional ban. Red states with a blue box have both.



Permits gay marriage | Permits civil unions | Offers registry of domestic partnership | State law prohibits same-sex marriage | State constitutional amendment prohibits same-sex marriage | No state law or policy

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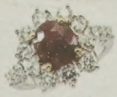

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Ring around the ballot

If four same-sex union measures make the ballot, Colorado makes history

By Cate Terwilliger

This fall, Coloradans will decide up to four ballot measures regarding a single, volatile issue: same-sex partnerships. It's an unprecedented yet fitting scenario in a state that, 14 years ago, became a battleground for Christian fundamentalists and gay-rights activists polarized by a voter-approved initiative that earned Colorado the "hate state" moniker.

"In some ways, this is 1992 all over again," says Denver lobbyist and attorney Pat Steadman, who helped draft a 2006 initiative that supports domestic partnerships for same-sex man and one woman. On the other side, there's Referendum H, which authorizes the creation of same-sex domestic partnerships, and Initiative 139, which counters Perkins' measure.

Stirring emotion

To date, Referendum H, a change to state law approved by the general assembly in May, is the only measure assured a place on the ballot. Each of the other three

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happen, the one with the most votes prevails.

But Boulder attorney Jean Dubofsky anticipates another scenario.

"There are so many initiatives, that probably everything will go down," says Dubofsky, who argued against Amendment 2 before the Supreme Court. "It's unlikely that anything will pass if voters are not sure what to do or don't care much."

Supporters of the initiatives will do their best to make voters care

A Focus on action

Both groups can expect plenty of help from Focus on the Family. Focus founder James Dobson — who earlier lent his organization's considerable clout to the push for Amendment 2 — recently told his daily radio audience that "marriage is under vicious attack … from the forces of hell itself" and that its destruction presages the decline of Western civilization.

Focus on the Family Action, the ministry's separate lobbying arm, has contributed $55,000 so far to Coloradans for Marriage

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This year they're trying to take our privately funded domestic partner benefits away from us, via the initiative process. What can we expect next year — forced conversion therapy?

Richard Kettner-Polley
Colorado Springs

Gill Foundation is hostile to Judeo-Christian values

I want to thank The Gazette for bringing the Denver-based Gill Foundation to our attention. In essence, the foundation has declared war on Colorado Springs to the tune of a $900,000 ad campaign, because we have been determined to be hostile to the homosexual agenda. Think about that. If we are hostile to mainstreaming the homosexual lifestyle, it's because we are friendly to the Judeo-Christian foundation upon which this great nation was built.

The Gill Foundation has demonstrated, substantially, that it is hostile to Colorado Springs.

Bruce Foster
Colorado Springs

Braying mules more appropriate mascots

In this dog-eat-dog world in which we live, it's amusing to see Focus on the Family cast aside its prejudice, intolerance and arrogance to come up with its own version of conversation-prompting ads. Truly, an animal that would have been a much better choice is one that brays.

Rebecca Davis
Colorado Springs

Focus, gays likely

church fundraisers, conducting Bible studies and donating money to the poor. If they want people to believe they should have marriage rights, they should show the world how boring they truly are.

If Focus on the Family believes only 2 percent of people are gay, then why is it so worried about the gays taking over with their "agenda?" How is 2 percent of the population going to corrupt the other 98 percent? Shouldn't it be focusing on what is really important — like bringing more people to Jesus? And by the way, being married does not prove you are straight; It just proves you are married.

Seana Hurd
Colorado Springs

Heimlicher is wrong; banners make political point

I was irritated to read Councilman Jerry Heimlicher's words about the "moo" banners posted on city property (" 'Moo' campaign sets off sparks," The Gazette, July 10). Heimlicher said "I don't consider them political statements."

Baloney.

Those banners are intended to promote a very controversial point of view. They are not advertising an event or celebration. If the "moo" banners are not political, I don't know what is. Their appearance on city property is inappropriate in the extreme.

Charles Rollman
Colorado Springs

Organizations should focus on nation's real problems

Shame on the Gill Foundation and Focus on the Family. Their recent canine campaigns are absolutely pointless and silly, if not childish. We must urge these organizations to devote their time and immense resources to help solve the critical problems dragging down our republic. If they don't know what the critical problems are, they should not expect continuing support.

Rick Richter
Colorado Springs

Ring around the ballot

If four same-sex union measures make the ballot, Colorado makes history

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"In some ways, this is 1992 all over again," says Denver lobbyist and attorney Pat Steadman, who helped draft a 2006 initiative that supports domestic partnerships for same-sex couples. "Here we go again, using a ballot initiative targeting gay people to bring out the base, and influence an election."

A sense of déjà vu may be the only thing Steadman and retired Colorado Springs car dealer Will Perkins have in common. Now a proponent of an initiative that forbids the state from creating or recognizing "a legal status similar … to marriage," Perkins was a key player in the 1992 passage of Amendment 2, which banned laws protecting gays from discrimination.

Perkins' group, Colorado for Family Values, packaged the measure as a ban on "special rights" and minority status for gays.

The U.S. Supreme Court, however, disagreed. In a 1996 decision declaring the measure unconstitutional, the court concluded just the opposite: that Amendment 2 aimed to exclude gays from "ordinary civic life."

"Its sheer breadth is so discontinuous with the reasons offered for it that the amendment seems inexplicable by anything but animus toward the class it affects," the court wrote. "It lacks a rational relationship to legitimate state interests."

Come November, Coloradans may have to decide whether the same is true of the current Perkins measure, which gay-rights advocates have dubbed "Son of Amendment 2." They may also evaluate Initiative 83, which reiterates Colorado's statutory definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman. On the other side, there's Referendum H, which authorizes the creation of same-sex domestic partnerships, and Initiative 139, which counters Perkins' measure.

Stirring emotion

To date, Referendum H, a change to state law approved by the general assembly in May, is the only measure assured a place on the ballot. Each of the other three — which would amend the constitution — must attract 67,829 valid signatures by Aug. 7 to win a spot.

If all succeed, it will mark the first time in Colorado history that voters have been asked to decide so many measures concerning a single social issue. And it will be the first time any state has asked voters to decide competing measures concerning same-sex unions.

Another likely first? An unprecedented amount of voter confusion — and the possibility that conflicting measures will pass. Should that happen, the one with the most votes prevails.

But Boulder attorney Jean Dubofsky anticipates another scenario.

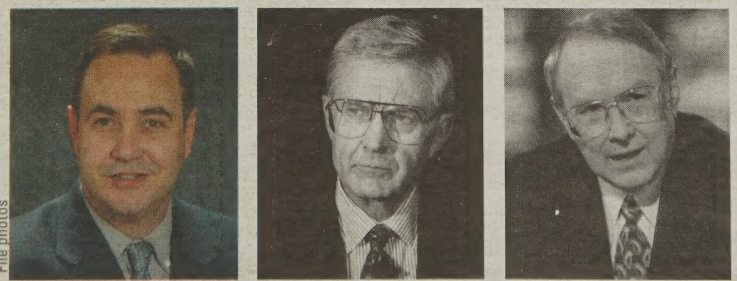
"There are so many initiatives, that probably everything will go down," says Dubofsky, who argued against Amendment 2 before the Supreme Court. "It's unlikely that anything will pass if voters are not sure what to do or don't care much."

> **"There are so many initiatives, that probably everything will go down."**
>
> *— Jean Dubofsky, attorney*

Supporters of the initiatives will do their best to make voters care — though truth and transparency are already being sucker-punched in the battle to stir emotion.

Perkins calls his group Protecting Colorado Children — a confusing designation for voters whose concern extends to the estimated 6,000 Colorado kids being raised by same-sex couples.

Initiative 83 backers call themselves Coloradans for Marriage, though they are, more accurately, Coloradans for Heterosexual Marriage. (Or, as one pro-gay group suggests, Coloradans for Marriages In Which "Here Comes The Bride" Doesn't Need to Be Either Pluralized or Altered.)



File photos

Left to right: Coloradans for Fairness and Equality spokesman Pat Steadman; Initiative 109 author Will Perkins; Focus on the Family founder James Dobson.

A Focus on action

Both groups can expect plenty of help from Focus on the Family. Focus founder James Dobson — who earlier lent his organization's considerable clout to the push for Amendment 2 — recently told his daily radio audience that "marriage is under vicious attack … from the forces of hell itself" and that its destruction presages the decline of Western civilization.

Focus on the Family Action, the ministry's separate lobbying arm, has contributed $55,000 so far to Coloradans for Marriage and $2,000 to the recently formed Protecting Colorado Children, says Jim Pfaff, the organization's national representative for family policy councils. In addition to funneling cash to the initiatives, Focus will make certain that "all of our constituents know exactly what's going on," Pfaff says.

The 800-pound gorilla on the other side is the pro-gay Gill Foundation, which through Gill Action has contributed $179,000 to Coloradans for Fairness and Equality, an action fund formed last November to support domestic partnerships.

Expect the CFE campaign, also, to play to emotion. Television spots the group is airing feature a worried man barred from his partner's hospital room, and a baby whose future ability to care for loved ones is threatened because he was "born gay."

In fact, gay couples who can afford an attorney may establish legal contracts that confer some benefits associated with marriage — including hospital visitation rights — though the process is piecemeal and the results more susceptible to legal challenge.

Likewise, researchers remain uncertain of what determines sexual orientation, though most credit a combination of genetic, biological, psychological and social factors.

Here's a preview of things to come:

Initiative 83

Shall there be an amendment to the

continued on pg. 16 →

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Colorado Springs

Braying mules more appropriate mascots

In this dog-eat-dog world in which we live, it's amusing to see Focus on the Family cast aside its prejudice, intolerance and arrogance to come up with its own version of conversation-prompting ads. Truly, an animal that would have been a much better choice is one that brays.

Rebecca Davis
Colorado Springs

Focus, gays likely to have much in common

I'd like to volunteer as Norman's and Sherman's dog walker. I'd hook them up to their leashes and take them to one of Colorado Springs' beautiful parks. My guess is they'd have a great time playing together. They'd do dog stuff — barking at birds, marking trees and just running — glad to be alive.

I think they'd discover, even though they're different breeds, that they're more alike than different. There's a lot to learn from dogs.

Diane Gardner
Minneapolis, Minn.

Campaign backfires on gays and their agenda

The recent billboards that show a dog saying "moo" contradict the gays' premise that they are born gay. Show us one dog that is born saying "moo," without having been taught.

Sharon Cooper
Falcon

Moralistic civil war should moove elsewhere

The never-ending fight between The Gill Foundation and Focus in the Family has gotten tiresome. Moo, woof, who cares? These two opponents are, once again, making Colorado Springs the arena for their little test of wills.

I'd bet most people in this town want this sensationalism to stop staining the overall reputation of the city. That reputation, as reported in Money magazine, is excellent. The warring parties in this moralistic civil war are turning Colorado Springs into the Lebanon of the United States.

A bartender, tiring of the antics of two yay-hoos, would tell them, "take it out back, boys." We're getting tired of this melodrama being played out over and over in a city with better things to do.

John A. Cunningham
Colorado Springs

If gays want acceptance they should just be boring

Surprise, surprise; Focus on the Family and gay people are fighting again. Let's be honest. We all know dogs don't moo, and frankly, the Gill Foundation wasted its money on that campaign.

If gays want to elicit change and be taken seriously, they should stop holding up signs that say "Dykes on Trykes" and stop making their drag queen name puns such as "Anita Man" ("Gays, backers celebrate," Metro, July 18). Instead, they should show the world their average lives with their average kids. No one sees the Christian gays happily holding potlucks for church fundraisers, conducting Bible studies and donating money to the poor. If they want people to believe they should have marriage rights, they should show the world how boring they truly are.

If Focus on the Family believes only 2 percent of people are gay, then why is it so worried about the gays taking over with their "agenda?" How is 2 percent of the population going to corrupt the other 98 percent? Shouldn't it be focusing on what is really important — like bringing more people to Jesus? And by the way, being married does not prove you are straight; It just proves you are married.

Seana Hurd
Colorado Springs

Heimlicher is wrong; banners make political point

I was irritated to read Councilman Jerry Heimlicher's words about the "moo" banners posted on city property (" 'Moo' campaign sets off sparks," The Gazette, July 10). Heimlicher said "I don't consider them political statements."

Baloney.

Those banners are intended to promote a very controversial point of view. They are not advertising an event or celebration. If the "moo" banners are not political, I don't know what is. Their appearance on city property is inappropriate in the extreme.

Charles Rollman
Colorado Springs

Organizations should focus on nation's real problems

Shame on the Gill Foundation and Focus on the Family. Their recent canine campaigns are absolutely pointless and silly, if not childish. We must urge these organizations to devote their time and immense resources to help solve the critical problems dragging down our republic. If they don't know what the critical problems are, they should not expect continuing support.

Rick Richter
Colorado Springs

BORN DIFFERENT?

7/23/06

Let's stop pointless debate and get on with our lives

I guess I've seen it all. Focus on the Family and the gay rights people have succeeded in becoming like two high school kids trying to prove something — or maybe 7-year-olds. Focus should preach its philosophy in the church and stay out of the influence business. If gay people worry about discrimination, why don't they include in their program all the heterosexual people living together to get the same rights they want?

It is immaterial how a person became gay; he or she is gay. The truth is, this is a subject you won't change and in a democracy, we all have a right to live our lives as we see fit.

Both groups should get off the bandwagons and go on with their lives. I am tired of the continuous back-and-forth debates over nothing.

Rodney E. Hammond
Colorado Springs

Mooing dog loved for who he was

Who'd have guessed that the question of whether dogs moo would become the great issue of our time? I'm always reluctant to out one of my canine companions about their uncommon behaviors, but in this case I hope my observations help to clear up a contentious issue on canine nature.

I once owned a dog that mooed. Yuri was an Afghan hound who had a remarkable vocal repertoire. When he howled, he could imitate everything from a siren to an alien spacecraft landing in your backyard. And yes, even the sound of a mooing cow.

Once, when he was tied outside on a dairy farm, he got a whole heard of cows to respond. Sadly, I had no idea at the time of the significance of what he was trying to tell me. I just loved him for who he was.

John Horner
Colorado Springs

BORN DIFFERENT?

7/29/06

Compassionate Christians should show tolerance

I've had the good fortune to know many gay people as friends, and the common theme has been that they knew on some level from a young age that they were different from many of their peers. The flamboyant drag queens and the "Dykes on Trykes" referred to by a letter writer actually make up a very small percentage of the gay community ("If gays want acceptance they should just be boring," July 22).

My gay friends are just regular people. They did not choose their lifestyle. Why would anyone choose a lifestyle that, in many cases, puts them at risk of alienation from their family, their church, homophobic members of society, and possibly opens the door to job discrimination that could threaten his or her career?

The Bible does condemn homosexual sex. It also condemns sex of any form outside marriage. However, it does not say that simply being homosexual is wrong. Since God is divine and perfect, I do not believe he could have created homosexual people by mistake. And, I would be willing to bet that at least 50 percent of the congregation of any church has committed, or is currently committing, the sin of premarital or extramarital sex.

The Jesus Christ I have come to know would reach out to the gay community with love and compassion. And, since I am a sinner as well, and God had to send his only son to die for me, I do not feel entitled to pass judgment on the gay community or to support belief systems and legislation designed to make their lives unhappy or more difficult.

Perhaps our challenge as Christians, in striving to emulate Christ, is to show compassion and tolerance to one another regardless of sexual orientation.

Laura Evans
Colorado Springs

Moms love kids whether they moo or woof

I'm the mother of three sons, two step-

ZITS By Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman

HA! HA! BILLY, YOUR SHOES LOOK SO GAY!
I AM GAY, JEREMY.
I KNOW.
I DIDN'T MEAN "GAY" AS IN "HOMOSEXUAL." I MEANT "GAY" AS IN "LAME."
WHY DO PEOPLE ALWAYS MISINTERPRET WHAT I SAY?

Robert Armintor

From: "Robert Armintor"
To: "Colo. Spgs. Gazette" <opinion@gazette.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 23, 2006 7:06 PM
Subject: Unequal "rights"

I'd like to thank Rodney E. Hammond for his letter to the editor in Sunday's Gazette.
Mr. Hammond asked the question "If gay people worry about discrimination, why don't they include in their program all the heterosexual people living together to get the same rights they want?"
The answer, Mr. Hammond, is that heterosexual people living together have an option not available to gay and lesbian couples...namely the **heterosexual couples can get married**. Gay and lesbian couples are forbidden by state law from marrying. Heterosexual couples can go down to the office of the County Clerk & Recorder, make application for a marriage license, pay a small fee, and simply walk out the door. They then can take the license to a judge, Justice of the Peace, or their minister, participate in a marriage ceremony, and become husband and wife. After doing so they automatically receive numerous benefits...inheritance rights...the right of making health decisions for their sick or dying spouse...just to name a few. And, since the Colorado Constitution also recognizes "common law marriage," heterosexual couples don't even need a marriage license! They only have to live together, declaring to family and/or friends that they consider themselves "husband and wife" to have the State recognize their union as a marriage.
So, you see, that since **gay and lesbian couples can't marry**, the domestic benefits referendum that will be presented to the voters this Fall is just about the only thing that could help "level the playing field" somewhat. I hope you'll support its passage.
Thanks for your comments and interest.

Bob Armintor

7/27/06

GAY MARRIAGE

Ballot issue would allow all couples same benefits

Rodney E. Hammond asked the question, "If gay people worry about discrimination, why don't they include in their program all the heterosexual people living together to get the same rights they want?" ("Let's stop pointless debate and get on with our lives," July 23) The answer is that heterosexual people living together have an option not available to gay and lesbian couples — they can get married.

After doing so, they automatically receive numerous benefits — inheritance rights, the right of making health decisions for their sick or dying spouse and others denied gay couples. And, since the Colorado constitution also recognizes "common law marriage," heterosexual couples don't even need a marriage license. They only have to live together, declaring to family and/or friends that they consider themselves "husband and wife" to have the state recognize their union as a marriage.

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Perhaps our challenge as Christians, in striving to emulate Christ, is to show compassion and tolerance to one another regardless of sexual orientation.

Laura Evans
Colorado Springs

Moms love kids whether they moo or woof

I'm the mother of three sons, two stepsons and I have three grandsons. I'm familiar with boys, right? But guess what. Two of them moo and six of them bark.

They were all raised in loving, caring, supportive families. There is absolutely no difference in their love of God, country or family.

I lost one of my "moos" to AIDS in 1993. He would love and laugh at this moo thing were he here today.

I challenge anyone from Focus on the Family to sit down with me and discuss the true origin of homosexuality. Who better than a mom to know and understand (although because of ignorance and church oppression, many moms don't).

There are many more important things in this world to focus on than the beautiful moos of our sons.

Carole Laxton
Colorado Springs

Christian ministries' stance makes city an unhappy place

The Gazette feels we should gloat a bit about Colorado Springs being voted "best place to live" by Money magazine ("A moment to gloat," Our View, June 23). The Gazette seems to have completely ignored the fact that Colorado Springs is anything but a happy place. We are a community torn by our overbearing Christian organizations whose disdain for gays and lesbians is legend.

The Gazette's homage to the Springs omitted the relentless and tenacious attacks by ersatz Christian ministries on people who contribute as much or more to our community than any of the religionists. The homage to Colorado Springs, I'm afraid, was tainted by that omission.

Richard Baker
Colorado Springs

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Colorado Springs

7/23/2006

MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

GT 6/14/06

Married couples need info to panic properly

As my wife and I approach our 35th wedding anniversary in August, I would appreciate someone laying out in detail precisely what it is that we should be looking over our shoulders for if two men or two women are allowed (gasp!) to marry. Sen. Wayne Allard says that "traditional marriage is under assault," and James Dobson agrees that gays "want to destroy the institution of marriage."

To be properly paranoid, we need details. It never seems to go beyond those vague statements. Do we need more locks on our doors? Will our marriage license in a safe deposit box be the target of an armed assault? Will one or both of us be kidnapped and subsequently brainwashed into becoming gay or finding marriage to be icky? We need to know.

In the meantime, we'll be trying to decide how to enjoy what will apparently be our last anniversary prior to our gay-inspired divorce.

Dick Maxwell
Colorado Springs

Parade Magazine 7/16/06

Dean: Screen icon appealed to both sexes

Q What do you make of the persistent rumors that the late James Dean was gay or bisexual?—*Mitch W., Wheeling, W. Va.*

A Those rumors are true, according to *Surviving James Dean*, a new memoir by Bill Bast, 75, the actor's former roommate. "I helped Jimmy compose a letter that declared he was a 'practicing homosexual' and that won him a draft exemption in 1952," says Bast. "Jimmy was 'ambidextrous'—good at using people, men as well as women."

DS), SCREEN SCENES (DEAN) AND GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE (ALEXANDER)

PublicEye

By Cara DeGette

No license to bark

If he walks like a psychologist and barks like a psychologist, is he a psychologist? In the case of **Bill Maier**, Focus on the Family's official psychologist-in-residence, the answer is no. At least to the state of Colorado — which takes very seriously its regulation that practicing psychologists be licensed in this state.

Last year, the Colorado Legislature adopted a statute, effective July 1, 2005, establishing a board of psychological examiners that can take disciplinary action against those practicing without a license "in order to safeguard the public health, safety and welfare of the people of this state and in order to protect the people of this state ..."

If that is not perfectly clear, here are the words of **Gayle Fidler**, program director for Colorado's mental health board: "If they are holding themselves out as a licensed psychologist, then they have to have a license." Fidler confirmed last Friday that Maier does not hold a license in Colorado.

"Psychologists have spent millions of person-hours and dollars helping to get legislation passed so the public will have confidence when they go to someone who calls him- or herself a psychologist," notes Colorado Springs psychologist **Michael Galvin**.

"To protect the people of this state ..."

At its Web site at family.org, Focus on the Family promotes Maier as its resident "licensed child and family psychologist" who "acts as a media spokesperson for Focus on a variety of family-related issues." The nonprofit's 2005 tax form lists Maier as one of its five highest-paid employees (not counting Focus officers, directors and trustees), pulling in a compensation package of $108,000. He lives in Colorado Springs with his wife and two children.

Over the past week, Maier-the-psychologist has been quoted widely, from the *New York Times* to the *Rocky Mountain News*, to the *Gazette*, to Channel 9 News in Denver. He's weighed in critically on the Gill Foundation-sponsored "Born Different" public interest campaign, which suggests that people may be born gay. He's also criticized Soulforce, a nonprofit whose members marched to Colorado Springs last week to protest Focus on the Family's mischaracterizations of gays and lesbians.

On July 18, the *Gazette* even gave Maier a platform. In a long op-ed piece, he asserted that "no one is born gay," that "thousands" of people have "walked away from homosexuality," and that the Gill Foundation's advertising blitz was merely designed to get voters to approve a proposed domestic partnership proposal likely to be on this November's statewide ballot.

In the op-ed, Maier accused the Gill Foundation's dog-says-moo campaign of being "terribly misleading." However, Maier used at least one terribly misleading claim of his own. Citing a "fact sheet" issued by the respected American Psychiatric Association on gay and lesbian issues, Maier pointed out the group states that "to date there are no replicated scientific studies supporting any specific biological etiology for homosexuality."

That snippet came from a much more extensive position paper issued by the APA, which can be read at healthyminds.org/glbissues.cfm. While no one knows what causes heterosexuality, homosexuality or bisexuality, the APA maintains it "opposes any psychiatric treatment, such as 'reparative' or 'conversion' therapy, which is based upon the assumption that homosexuality per se is a mental disorder, or based upon a prior assumption that the patient should change his/her homosexual orientation."

Gee, Maier conveniently didn't mention *that* part of the fact sheet. Perhaps that's because the APA's stance is in stark contrast to Focus on the Family's claims that gays can be "cured."

Focus' online biography of Maier describes him as having received master's and doctoral degrees from the Rosemead School of Psychology at Biola University in La Mirada, Calif., which advertises itself as the "only all-Christian

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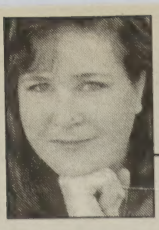

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This week, **Gary Schneeberger**, Focus' public policy media director, iterated Maier's university credentials, and said that he has been licensed in California. (Records list his status in that state as currently inactive.)

"Because [Maier] does not provide psychotherapeutic services as part of his role here at Focus, he has not pursued getting a license here in Colorado," Schneeberger said.

Just in case you're wondering, Focus on the Family founder and Chairman **James Dobson** is, indeed, licensed in Colorado, as a marriage and family therapist. State records show that Dobson first received his license on Aug. 28, 1992; it was renewed on July 1, 2005 and is good through June 30, 2007.

— degette@csindy.com

EDUCATION

7/29/06 GT

Colleges ranked by treatment of gays

Book weighs services, campuses' friendliness

THE BOSTON GLOBE

In an age when colleges tune into rankings, a new focus for campus assessment is emerging: gay-friendliness.

The Advocate, a national newsmagazine for gays and lesbians, published a 389-page book this month listing the 100 schools it says offer the best discrimination protection, friendliest climate and most extensive campus services for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered students.

MIT, for one, made the top 100.

The school is cited for having one of the nation's oldest gay and lesbian student groups and for early on including sexual orientation and gender identity in its nondiscrimination policy, yielding what the book, "The Advocate College Guide," calls a high "gay point average."

"It is a welcoming place," said Natalija Jovanovic, a graduate engineering student at MIT and president of the Rainbow Coffee House, a gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual social group. "Because it's so technically oriented, if you are good at what you do, nothing else matters."

The book arrives as surveys show that more gay and lesbian students are coming out at younger ages, often in high school, placing the climate of a college campus at the forefront of more students' minds as they select schools.

"A lot of high school kids have already dealt with the issue of coming out by the time they get to college," said Bruce Steele, the editor of the Advocate, whose sister company, Alyson Books, published the guide.

Steele said the book's aim is to help those students and their parents make an informed college choice. It does not assign individual rankings.

Since 1992, the Princeton Review has ranked the 20 schools it considers the most and least "gay community accepted."

This year, the review ranked New York University as most gay friendly and Notre Dame most inhospitable.

Steele points out that the Review's gay-friendly rankings are based on student opinion, and his guide is based on quantifiable data.

Harriet Brand, spokeswoman for the Review, said the survey of 115,000 students is more compelling because students offer a more accurate, ground-level gauge of a campus's climate.

The publishing house has no sales figures yet for the book, which had a first run of 5,000 copies and is expected to be placed in stores' college preparation sections, not their gay and lesbian sections.

The rankings, educators said, might not have been possible to calculate a decade ago, because there were fewer services for gay and lesbian students.

Ban on gay marriage upheld in Washington

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OLYMPIA, Wash. • The Washington Supreme Court upheld the state's ban on gay marriage Wednesday, dealing the gay rights movement its second major defeat in less than a month in a liberal-leaning state that was regarded as a promising battleground.

The ruling leaves Massachusetts as the only state to allow gays to wed.

In a 5-4 decision, the Washington court said lawmakers have the power to restrict marriage to a man and a woman, and it left intact the state's 1998 Defense of Marriage Act. The court overruled

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Harper Sigafoos, 7, left, with her parents, Nancy Sigafoos, center, and Tina Witcher-Sigafoos, at the Temple of Justice in Olympia, Wash., after the state Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage.

"GT" 7/27/06

PEOPLE TALK

'N Sync member says he's gay

Lance Bass

Lance Bass, a member of the band 'N Sync, has revealed he's gay and in a "very stable" relationship with 32-year-old actor **Reichen Lehmkuhl**, winner of season four of CBS' "Amazing Race."

Bass, who formed 'N Sync with **Justin Timberlake**, **JC Chasez**, **Joey Fatone** and **Chris Kirkpatrick**, tells People magazine he kept his sexuality secret earlier to avoid hurting the group's popularity.

"I knew I had four other guys' careers in my hand, and I knew that if I ever acted on it or even said (that I was gay), it would overpower everything," the Mississippi-bred, Southern Baptist-reared Bass, 27, said.

As for why he's talking now, Bass says, "The main reason I wanted to speak my mind was that (the rumors) really were starting to affect my daily life. Now it feels like it's on my terms. I'm more liberated and happy than I've been my whole life."

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"It is a welcoming place," said Natalija Jovanovic, a graduate engineering student at MIT and president of the Rainbow Coffee House, a gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual social group. "Because it's so technically oriented, if you are good at what you do, nothing else matters."

The book arrives as surveys show that more gay and lesbian students are coming out at younger ages, often in high school, placing the climate of a college campus at the forefront of more students' minds as they select schools.

"A lot of high school kids have already dealt with the issue of coming out by the time they get to college," said Bruce Steele, the editor of the Advocate, whose sister company, Alyson Books, published the guide.

Steele said the book's aim is to help those students and their parents make an informed college choice. It does not assign individual rankings.

Since 1992, the Princeton Review has ranked the 20 schools it considers the most and least "gay community accepted."

This year, the review ranked New York University as most gay friendly and Notre Dame most inhospitable.

Steele points out that the Review's gay-friendly rankings are based on student opinion, and his guide is based on quantifiable data.

Harriet Brand, spokeswoman for the Review, said the survey of 115,000 students is more compelling because students offer a more accurate, ground-level gauge of a campus's climate.

The publishing house has no sales figures yet for the book, which had a first run of 5,000 copies and is expected to be placed in stores' college preparation sections, not their gay and lesbian sections.

The rankings, educators said, might not have been possible to calculate a decade ago, because there were fewer services for gay and lesbian students.

Ban on gay marriage upheld in Washington

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

OLYMPIA, Wash. • The Washington Supreme Court upheld the state's ban on gay marriage Wednesday, dealing the gay rights movement its second major defeat in less than a month in a liberal-leaning state that was regarded as a promising battleground.

The ruling leaves Massachusetts as the only state to allow gays to wed.

In a 5-4 decision, the Washington court said lawmakers have the power to restrict marriage to a man and a woman, and it left intact the state's 1998 Defense of Marriage Act. The court overruled two lower courts that had found the ban violated the Washington Constitution's "privileges and immunities" section.

The gay-marriage ban "is constitutional because the Legislature was entitled to believe that limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples furthers procreation, essential to survival," Justice Barbara Madsen wrote in the controlling opinion. However, Madsen and other other members of the majority invited the Legislature to take another look at the "clear hardship" that the ban causes for gay couples. In a dissent, Justice Mary Fairhurst said the majority improperly bowed to public opinion.

Forty-five states have laws banning gay marriage or limiting marriage to between a man and a woman.

Earlier this month, New York's high court upheld a state law against same-sex marriage. In other recent rulings on the issue, courts reinstated voter-approved bans on gay marriage in Nebraska and Georgia.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Harper Sigafoos, 7, left, with her parents, Nancy Sigafoos, center, and Tina Witcher-Sigafoos, at the Temple of Justice in Olympia, Wash., after the state Supreme Court's ruling on gay marriage.

THE CAUSE OF HOMOSEXUALITY

Born different? Del hounds gays, scien

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

The furry mascots of two Colorado Springs advertising campaigns are nipping at each other over the origin of homosexuality, reflecting a dogfight that has played out for years among scientists.

The first ad campaign appeared in June featuring Norman, a puppy who says "moo." Organizers said Norman illustrates their argument that some people are born gay a their sexual orientati

Except for the cud that's the position of sexual development, Cornwell, a psycholo researcher at the Un rado at Colorado Spr

"The evidence for basis for homosexual strong," she said. "It's lot of different areas."

Not everyone agre Springs-based Christ Focus on the Family tisements July 19 dog mascot, Sh only "woof" be what dogs do. Focus emplo perts, who ci try consid biolog mos

The Gazet

DOGS: Some question relevance of debate

FROM PAGE 1

The science behind the central question, whether some people are born gay, can be confusing for people not trained in research, Cornwell said. Few scientists would argue there's "proof" people are born gay, she said.

But studies have found that gay people are more likely to share some physical traits, from brain topography to hearing acuity, and other factors such as hormones play a role, she said.

"The religious right has been very, very successful at creating controversy where there is none," she said. "The scientists who study in this area, it's not a question that there's a biological component, it's just how that biological component is working."

That Focus on the Family questions some of the studies doesn't mean the ministry denies that biological factors might be at work in sexual preference, said Focus vice president and psychologist in residence Bill Maier.

"For some gay men and women, their homosexuality may be related to (as of yet undefined) biological factors that may contribute to certain types of personality temperaments," Maier said in an e-mail to The Gazette. "These unique temperaments then interact with social, familial and environmental factors, leading (in some cases) to same-sex attraction. This is quite different from claiming that homosexuals are 'born gay.' "

Some who argue that people are born gay point to the occurrence of homosexuality among animals. The Born Different ad campaign, for example, refers on its Web site to the case of two male penguins that it says "mate exclusively with each other."

Focus on the Family responded on its Web site with the story of male penguins in a New York zoo that stayed together for six years until one of them was drawn away by a female penguin. Focus argues that the idea of using animals as a guide for human behavior was silly in the first place.

"Rats and hamsters eat their young. Black widow spiders kill their mates. Do we consider those things natural behavior for humans, too?" the ministry said on its Web site.

It turns out even the penguins from the Born Different campaign have had a change of heart. Jane Carruthers, a representative for Kelly Tarlton's Antarctic Encounter & Underwater World, a New Zealand tourist attraction where the penguins live, said the two are not as close as they used to be.

"At the moment they are not really even courting, but it is not the breeding season so it all may change again," Carruthers said in an e-mail. "Penguins tend to change partners each season, so it was strange that the penguins stayed close for 10 years prior to their 'breakup.' Because of this, it is probably not appropriate for them to be seen as promoting gay rights."

Cornwell, the UCCS psychology researcher, denied that animal behavior has no relevance for people.

The study of animal behavior has led to greater understanding of humans in many areas, such as looking at monkeys to understand the human visual system, she said. The fact that homosexuality exists among animals suggests it has a biological basis for humans, she said.

"We learn a lot about humans by understanding the behavior of other animals. Among scientists, that's just accepted," Cornwell said.

Some people watching the debate argue that the question of whether people are born gay is mostly academic and shouldn't have implications for social policy. Even if homosexuality is purely a choice, that shouldn't be an excuse for denying equal rights to gay people, said Brad Luna, a spokesman for the Human Rights Campaign, a gay advocacy group.

But Maier, of Focus on the Family, said the question matters because the answer could sway public opinion on political questions. He said efforts such as the Born Different campaign are really a disguised attempt to advance legal changes that would grant more rights to gay people.

"Americans are fair-minded people," Maier said. "And they think 'Well, if an individual had no choice in the matter and was born this way, then certainly we should not try to obstruct them in their goals of same-sex marriage and parenting.' "

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8/3/06

Gay rights is tough for council to avoid

By ED SEALOVER
THE GAZETTE

The issue of gay rights in Colorado Springs, which has surfaced in talks about advisory boards and streetlights, has come up again during discussion of urban redevelopment.

The Urban Renewal Authority, a City Council-appointed board that oversees rejuvenation of blighted areas, reviewed contract language last week on the Gold Hill Mesa project. The contract is a standard agreement between the city and developer Bob Willard on the duties and obligations of both parties in the area's redevelopment.

Also standard is a clause in the contract banning Willard from discriminating against contractors or residents on the basis of sex, ethnicity, race or other factors. Into this, the authority's board inserted a nonstandard clause adding that he can't discriminate because of sexual orientation.

Authority board member Judy Noyes, a former city councilwoman, suggested the language when she realized that the current mention of "sex" in the clause refers to gender. There was little debate on the matter, and the six board members at the meeting approved it unanimously.

While saying it was not a big deal, Noyes realized that it could become one in a city where every mention of gay rights becomes a target for debate. She was one of the five council members who voted in 2002 to give health benefits to same-sex partners of city workers, a policy later overturned.

"I'm not trying to start anything or be on a soapbox," Noyes said. "It just seemed to be the right thing to do in light of the fact this has been such an issue in the community."

Chuck Miller, a consultant to the authority and retired city employee, said he believes this is the first time sexual ori-

SEE GAY RIGHTS • PAGE 2

GAY RIGHTS: Council members split on issue

FROM PAGE 1

entation has been included in an urban renewal nondiscrimination clause.

Because the authority derives its power from state law rather than city code, the language of the contract does not have to go before the council for approval. But it has made some on the council uncomfortable.

Councilwoman Margaret Radford said she finds it unnecessary and feels the clause is "aimed at a social agenda I don't agree with."

Councilman Darryl Glenn, who has found himself at odds with gay activists, said the city must have a consistent policy on nondiscrimination rather than one in which the protected classes change from contract to contract. He would like to have a discussion on it.

"I don't think we should have a board below us rewriting our policies," Glenn said.

Councilman Scott Hente, who sits on the authority board and backed the contract language, agrees that a discussion is needed. But he would like to include a clause on sexual orientation in overall city policies.

"I am against discrimination in every way, shape or form, so if we can include a clause against discrimination based on sexual orientation, that's fine with me," he said.

This talk follows a recent controversy over the hanging of banners for a pro-gay campaign on downtown street lights. It also comes months after talk of forming a city diversity board broke down amid protests from the gay community that it was not given a specific seat on the board.

Gold Hill Mesa, near U.S. Highway 24 and 21st Street, is planned as a way to develop an old gold mill site into a close-knit, pedestrian-oriented community. Willard said he would not discriminate based on sexual orientation but is considering barring convicted sexual predators from living there.

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8/5/06

Indiana court upholds gay adoption

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS • Indiana's Supreme Court let stand a ruling that allows unmarried couples, including those of the same sex, to adopt children through a joint petition that gives both partners equal custody.

In a 4-1 decision posted Friday, the high court refused to hear arguments in the case. That left in tact the April ruling by the Indiana Court of Appeals, which had overturned a lower court's ruling that state law limits adoption to married couples and individuals.

"The court acknowledged that two people can create a caring, stable, loving home for children without being married," said Patricia Logue, senior counsel for Lambda Legal's Midwest office in Chicago. "Not only is this a decision that will keep our clients' family intact, but this is a victory for the thousands of children in Indiana desperately in need of a caring home."

"GT" 8/12/06

Protesting 'don't ask, don't tell'

Gays start campaign against military policy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. • On paper, Haven Herrin seems to be an ideal candidate for military recruiters.

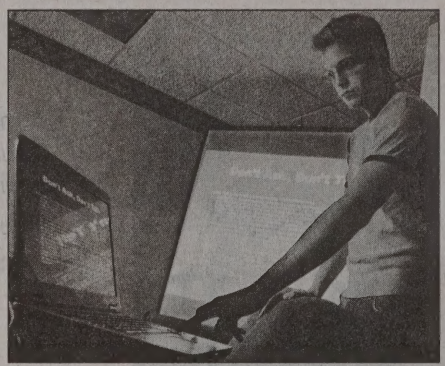
She can easily run five miles and was valedictorian of her college class. "Frankly, I'm exactly the kind of person the military says it wants," she said.

But when Herrin tried recently to sign up for the Minnesota National Guard, she was turned down because she told the recruiter she is a lesbian — a revelation that tripped the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy banning openly gay service members.

Her admission was the opening round of a nationwide campaign against the 13-year-old policy by a group of young activists. In the next few months, gay men and women in their late teens and early 20s will attempt to enlist at recruiting offices in 30 cities. They will disclose their sexual orientation.

If they are rebuffed, the activists plan to stage sit-ins at the offices, hoping to attract media coverage and support from a public they believe increasingly opposes the ban.

Organizers have dubbed the campaign Right to Serve. It was conceived by Herrin and Jacob Reitan, the 24-year-old young adult coordinator for the Virginia-based gay rights group called Soulforce.



Jacob Reitan pulled up a slide of the "don't ask, don't tell" military policy last week in Bloomington, Minn. Reitan is helping organize a campaign against the policy.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'GT" 8/12/06

Focus on the Family not invited to Braves' Faith Day

By PAUL NEWBERRY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA • The Atlanta Braves have barred Colorado Springs-based Focus on the Family from participating in the team's Faith Day postgame activities Sunday.

Focus on the Family, founded by James Dobson, sponsored the first Faith Day at Turner Field last month.

While the team wouldn't provide a reason for its decision, several gay rights groups on the Web speculated that Focus on the Family was given the boot for promoting its belief that homosexuality is a social problem comparable to alcoholism, gambling or depression.

The Braves were the first major league team to hold Faith Day, teaming up with Tennessee-based promoter Third Coast Sports to put on the event after a July 27 game against Florida.

Separate $10 tickets allowed fans to re-enter the left-field bleachers, where a stage was set up along the warning track. Pitcher John Smoltz gave a testimonial and a Christian band performed.

The Braves plan the same sort of event after Sunday's game against Milwaukee. Focus on the Family won't be one of the sponsors.

The group released a statement Friday saying the July 27 event "was first class and exceeded our expectations," but added that the Braves didn't want

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FOCUS: Group, Braves fail to disclose reasons for omission

FROM PAGE 1

them to take part in the Faith Days scheduled for August.

"For Focus on the Family, our involvement in Faith Days is all about being there to support the marriage and parenting needs of families," said Rich Bennett, the group's marketing director. "The Braves game in July was a great experience for us, and we are looking forward to participating in other Faith Days and Faith Nights events with Third Coast Sports in the future."

Bennett said the group never formally committed to the August dates and suggested that any other questions be directed to the Braves, who declined comment through spokeswoman Beth Marshall.

Third Coast Sports, which has sponsored similar events at minor league games and plans another at Turner Field on Aug. 26, also declined comment, saying it was a matter between the Braves and Focus on the Family. Dobson's group will continue to take part in future Third Coast promotions.

"We anticipate them being involved in other cities," spokesman Matt Toy said.

Focus on the Family was one of eight sponsors for the first event. All were allowed to set up tables where they could hand out literature and Christian-themed items to fans as they headed back into the stadium.

The Braves may have been wary that Focus on the Family was promoting its Web site www.troubledwith.com, in which the group gives suggestions for dealing with myriad problems.

Under the heading "Love & Sex," homosexuality is listed along with items such as dating and miscarriage. The group argues that homosexuality is not caused by genetics.

West Point thesis raps gay policy, wins award

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON • Alexander Raggio said he was 16 when he learned one of his relatives was gay, and watching that person's struggle introduced him to discrimination against gays.

He carried those feelings into West Point, and in his senior thesis argued the policy banning gays is not only wrong, but also harmful to the Army.

The Pentagon may not agree, but the U.S. Military Academy gave him an award for the paper.

"I love the Army and I think that this is hurting the Army," said Raggio, 24, in an interview last week from his military post at Fort Riley, Kan. "I see it as my obligation to say 'I don't agree with what you're doing.' I'm not being insubordinate — I just think we're making a mistake here."

He said it was the first time he had spoken publicly about the paper or the award, which he received last year when he graduated from West Point in New York.

While the topic was controversial, and the argument contrary to the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, Raggio was presented the Brig. Gen. Carroll E. Adams Award for the best senior thesis in the art, philosophy and literature major in the academy's English department.

"It won independent of the subject matter and content," said his thesis adviser, Richard Schoonhoven, a philosophy professor at West Point. "It was a closely argued piece of philosophical prose. He tackled a substantive issue, took a stand and didn't back down from the controversy. He presented a good case."

Initially Raggio worried about a backlash, and said people told him, "There's a possibility this will come back to haunt you, that people will use it against you."

In the end, however, he said he felt obligated to say what he thought.

"The Army often talks of doing the harder right rather than the easier wrong, and now it is time to put the policy where the propaganda is," he wrote in his 24-page thesis. "Allowing the open service of gays in the military is the right thing to do, no matter how difficult a transition it may be."

Under the Pentagon policy, the military is prohibited from inquiring about the sex lives of service members, but those who openly acknowledge being gay must be discharged.

There were 726 military members discharged under the policy during the year that ended Sept. 30.

"I have a problem where you have a military that says you can't discriminate based on race, in all but very minimal ways you can't discriminate based on gender, and you can't discriminate based on religion or lack of religion. The only people not getting a fair shake were homosexuals," said Raggio, who is from Muncie, Ind., and describes himself as "about the straightest guy you can imagine."

He said he knew by the time he was in seventh grade that he wanted to go to West Point and become a career Army officer. Now a second lieutenant, leading a platoon in the 97th Military Police Battalion, he talked eagerly of going to Iraq, possibly next year.

He plans to spend at least 20 years in the service, and he said he thinks the Army he loves is capable of integrating openly gay soldiers, much as it brought in minorities and women.

Study: Pentagon dropped 726 gays in '05

The Defense Department discharged 726 service members last year for being gay, up about 10 percent from 2004, figures released by a gay rights group show.

The group, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, obtained the information through a Freedom of Information Act request.

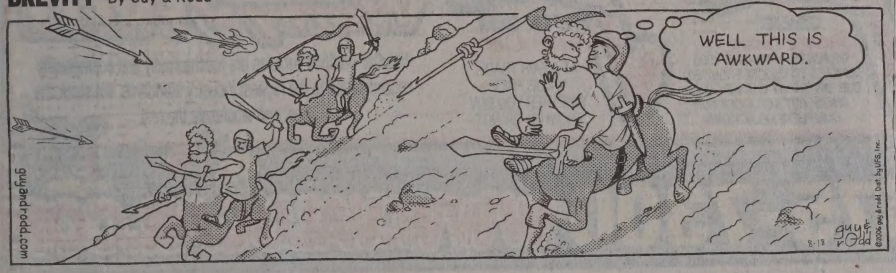
The Army, by far the largest branch, discharged more gay personnel last year than the other branches with 386, the figures show, followed by the Navy with 177, the Air Force with 88 and the Marines, the smallest force, had 75.

The overall number of men and women dismissed because they were found to be gay or because they disclosed their sexuality, had fallen for three years from 2002 to 2004. Since the September, 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the discharge rate has dropped 40 percent.

Under a policy introduced by the Clinton administration known as "don't ask, don't tell," the military cannot inquire into service members' sex lives unless there is evidence of homosexual conduct. Those who volunteer the information have to be discharged.

8/15/06

BREVITY By Guy & Rodd



TUESDAY, AUGUST 15, 2006

3 more initiatives on ballot

Political gifts join marriage, wages

By KYLE HENLEY
THE GAZETTE

DENVER • Proposals to ban gay marriage, raise the minimum wage and limit gifts to politicians will all be on Colorado's November ballot.

Secretary of State Gigi Dennis' office certified that the backers of amendments 41, 42 and 43 collected enough valid signatures to earn spots on the ballot. Citizens seeking to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot needed 67,829 valid signatures.

ELECTION 2006

Monday's announcement brings to six the number of citizen initiatives on the ballot, decriminalize marijuana in Colorado and a measure that would ban domestic partnerships. The Secretary of State's Office has until Sept. 6 to rule on those initiatives.

The three other measures that are already on the ballot include:

Amendment 38, which would make it easier for citizens to put initiatives on the ballot.

Amendment 39, which requires Colorado school districts to spend 65 cents of every $1 they receive in public funding on classroom instruction.

Amendment 40, which seeks to place term limits on judges serving on the Colorado Supreme Court and Colorado Court of Appeals.

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8/17/06

BREVITY By Guy & Rodd

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ELECTION 2006

Monday's announcement brings to six the number of citizen initiatives on the ballot, and two more are still awaiting approval.

Backers of Amendment 43, which seeks to ban gay marriage, say they are looking forward to getting the campaign going in earnest.

"While this means an end to the petition process, we are looking forward to the beginning of the campaign to protect marriage," said Jon Paul, executive director of Coloradans for Marriage. "We'll be seeing a lot more grass-roots organizations and a lot more individuals and churches organizing to get the message out."

Amendment 42 asks Coloradans to raise the state's minimum wage from $5.15 an hour — mandated by federal law — to $6.85 per hour.

Backers say the increase is needed because the state has not seen an increase in the minimum wage in nearly a decade. In that time, they say, the cost of living for the state's poor has gone up significantly.

Amendment 41 takes aim at the relationship between lobbyists and legislators by banning all gifts to elected officials. It also would bar legislators from becoming lobbyists for two years after they leave office and set up a commission to investigate and punish ethics violations.

"We're enormously excited the initiative qualified," said Pete Maysmith of Colorado Common Cause, one of the chief backers of Amendment 41. "We're excited to bring a strong ethics initiative to the voters this fall."

The other measures that are waiting for approval include an initiative that would decriminalize marijuana in Colorado and a measure that would ban domestic partnerships. The Secretary of State's Office has until Sept. 6 to rule on those initiatives.

The three other measures that are already on the ballot include:

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Amendment 40, which seeks to place term limits on judges serving on the Colorado Supreme Court and Colorado Court of Appeals.

"GT" 8/16/06

Dems rip Rowland's comments

GOP hopeful compared homosexuality, bestiality

By KYLE HENLEY
THE GAZETTE

DENVER • Democrats on Tuesday ripped the GOP's candidate for lieutenant governor, Janet Rowland, for comments she made in March comparing homosexuality with bestiality.

Gubernatorial candidate Bob Beauprez selected Rowland, a Mesa County commissioner, as his running mate Monday. A spokesman for the Beauprez campaign said Rowland apologized for her comments and the issue should be dropped.

Rowland made the comments in March on the "Colorado State of Mind" public affairs show on Rocky Mountain PBS.

She was part of a panel discussing domestic partnerships for same-sex couples.

During the show, Rowland said, "Homosexuality is an alternative lifestyle. That doesn't make it a marriage. Some people have group sex. Should we allow two men and three women to marry? Should we allow polygamy with one man and five wives? For some, bestiality is an alternative lifestyle. Do we allow a man to marry a sheep? At some point, we have to draw a line."

Democrat Bill Ritter's campaign seized the chance to put the newly minted GOP candidate on the defensive, charging that Rowland's comments represent an extreme point of view.

"Janet Rowland's comparison of homosexuality to bestiality is just plain insensitive, close-minded, derogatory and crude," said Ritter campaign manager Greg Kolomitz. "It shows just how far to the right and out of touch the Beauprez-Rowland ticket really is."

Beauprez spokesman John Marshall said Rowland regrets making the comment.

"She apologized," Marshall said. "People in the real world understand and you move on. She's done that."

Marshall said Rowland informed Beauprez about the comments before he named her as his running mate.

He said Ritter was attacking Rowland because she is a "very, very powerful campaigner."

Colorado voters will consider ballot measures that address gay unions.

State lawmakers put Referendum I on the ballot, a measure that asks voters to allow domestic partnerships. The measure would essen-

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The Gazette

GOVERNOR: Gay issues on Nov. ballot

FROM PAGE 1

tially allow same-sex couples to have some of the same rights afforded married heterosexual couples without calling it marriage.

Focus on the Family, the Colorado Springs-based ministry, helped put Amendment 43 on the ballot. It asks Coloradans to ban gay marriages.

Though Referendum I and Amendment 43 may seem at odds, they actually do not conflict and could both pass without creating any clashes.

Just in case, though, Secretary of State Gigi Dennis' office is also verifying the signatures of a ballot initiative that supports Referendum I. If it is determined the measure has enough valid signatures to earn a ballot spot, it would ask voters to recognize that domestic partnerships do not affect the institution of marriage.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 1-303-837-0613 or kyle.henley@gazette.com

Rivera, gays disagree on Springs' image

Mayor denies city is viewed as intolerant

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera sparred with gay activists and others Wednesday over whether the city has a reputation as unfriendly to gays.

Rivera said some city residents have told him Colorado Springs has a nationwide reputation for intolerance, but he hears a different story during travels around the nation.

"I don't think that's the perception of this city," Rivera told about 40 people who attended a meeting of the Pikes Peak Fund for Tolerance and Equality. "The perception of Colorado Springs is it's a great place to live, it's an open community."

That assertion drew sharp disagreement from several people, including Alma Cremones, the director of the Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival, a series of movies about gay-related subjects.

"What you hear and what I hear are entirely different," Cremones told Rivera.

She said the city's reputation threatens business development and discourages some people from moving here.

"If we were fair to gay people, this city would grow, and it would be better," she said.

Rivera responded: "This city is growing, we're creating new jobs, and it doesn't seem to be deterring a lot of other industries from coming here."

The Pikes Peak Fund for Tolerance and Equality invited Rivera to speak at its meeting, which was held at the Gay and Lesbian Fund for Colorado headquarters.

Rivera started with a presentation about city projects, including city plans to levy a fee on property owners to pay for improvements to the stormwater drainage system. But the discussion quickly turned to other questions such as Rivera's refusal to issue a proclamation honoring the PrideFest event put on by the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center.

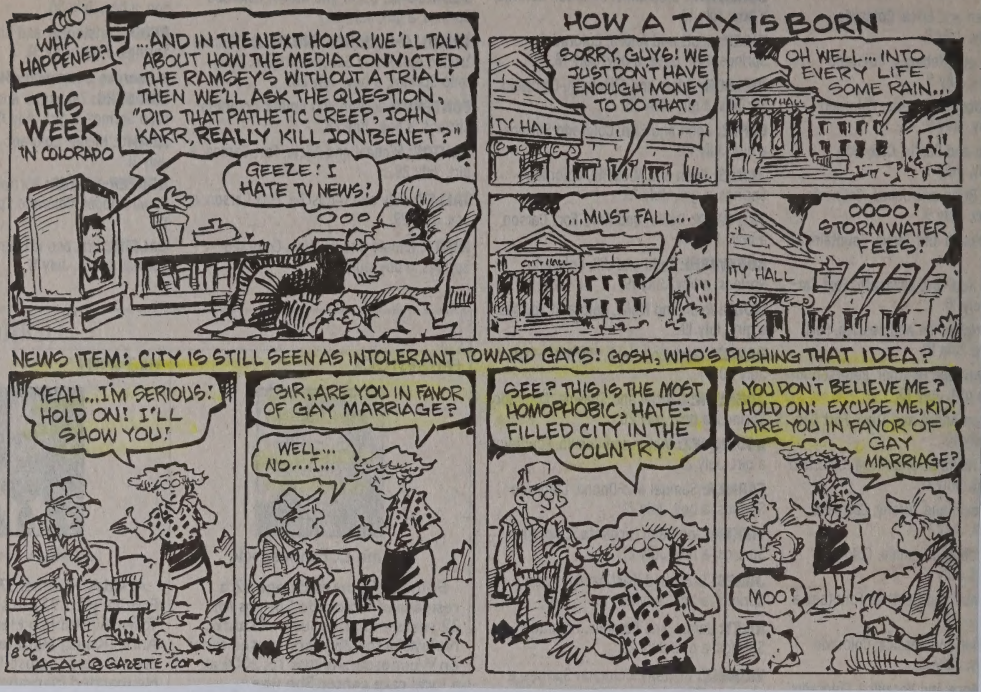
Rivera said he was mistaken to issue the proclamation in 2003, the year he became mayor, and refused to do it after that because he saw the event as promoting gay marriage.

The 2003 proclamation became an issue in Rivera's recent failed effort to represent Colorado's 5th Congressional District. A mailer sent by the Christian Coalition of Colorado cited the proclamation as evidence of Rivera's support for the "radical homosexual lobby." Rivera's campaign blasted the mailer and pointed out his vote the same year to end city health benefits for same-sex couples.

Still, Rivera said he opposes discrimination against gays. That led to a question of whether Rivera would support asking voters whether the city should include sexual orientation on its list of conditions that must not be the basis for discriminating against a city employee.

Rivera said he would oppose such a policy, and he would not support putting such a measure on an election ballot.

ASAY'S VIEW


WHA' HAPPENED?
THIS WEEK IN COLORADO
...AND IN THE NEXT HOUR, WE'LL TALK ABOUT HOW THE MEDIA CONVICTED THE RAMSEYS WITHOUT A TRIAL! THEN WE'LL ASK THE QUESTION, "DID THAT PATHETIC CREEP, JOHN KARR, REALLY KILL JONBENET?"
GEEZE! I HATE TV NEWS!
HOW A TAX IS BORN
SORRY, GUYS! WE JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO DO THAT!
OH WELL... INTO EVERY LIFE SOME RAIN...
...MUST FALL...
OOOO! STORM WATER FEES!
NEWS ITEM: CITY IS STILL SEEN AS INTOLERANT TOWARD GAYS! GOSH, WHO'S PUSHING THAT IDEA?
YEAH...I'M SERIOUS! HOLD ON! I'LL SHOW YOU!
SIR, ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF GAY MARRIAGE?
WELL... NO... I...
SEE? THIS IS THE MOST HOMOPHOBIC, HATE-FILLED CITY IN THE COUNTRY!
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? HOLD ON! EXCUSE ME, KID! ARE YOU IN FAVOR OF GAY MARRIAGE?
MOO!
ASAY@GAZETTE.COM

"GT" 8/27/06

$500,000 to fight gay marriage

Focus backing state amendment

By PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE

Colorado Springs-based Focus on the Family has spent more than $500,000 to support a constitutional amendment to block same-sex marriage in Colorado.

It's the most an organization has spent on an issue in state elections this year — an amount that seems remarkable given that state law bans same-sex marriage.

Although it is early in the election season and campaign committees have yet to form for many issues, the fight over gay unions is shaping up to be the most expensive on the November ballot, with donors contributing more than $1.3 million to two ballot initiatives:

- Amendment 43 would define marriage as between a man and woman and place it in the Colorado Constitution. The same provision is a state law.
- Referendum I would legalize same-sex domestic partnerships, giving most of the legal rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples to gay couples.

Voters could approve the constitutional amendment barring gay marriage and approve same-sex unions in the same election.

Gay-rights advocates see Amendment 43 as little better than legalized discrimination. Social conservatives say the amendment would safeguard what they call the traditional family.

Each side has contributed more than $500,000 so far.

The Coloradans for Fairness Issue Committee, which opposes Amendment 43, collected more than $613,000 as of Aug. 2, according to campaign finance records on the Colorado secretary of state's Web site (www.sos.state.co.us).

The committee has gathered the most money of any of the state's 57 issues committees.

Two issues committees supporting Amendment 43 — Coloradans for Marriage and the Colorado Family Action Issue Committee — have taken in a combined $750,720, according to the Secretary of State's Office.

Coloradans for Marriage circulated petitions to get the amendment on the ballot and has been its most visible advocate. Focus has given $55,000 to Coloradans for Marriage.

The Colorado Family Action Issue Committee — found-

SEE FOCUS • PAGE 4

2 PROPOSALS APPROVED

The Colorado Secretary of State's Office has approved two proposals related to same-sex unions for the November ballot.

- **Amendment 43:** An amendment that would define marriage as between a man and woman.
- **Referendum I:** A proposal that would legalize same-sex domestic partnerships.

Proponents of Amendment 45, an amendment that would also allow legalized same-sex domestic partnerships, pulled the amendment from the ballot Tuesday.

FOCUS: TV ads haven't aired

FROM PAGE 1

ed in June to support Amendment 43 and to oppose the domestic partnership proposal — has received more than twice as much money as Coloradans For Marriage. It was created with input from Focus on the Family Action, Focus' nonprofit lobbying arm.

The Focus organizations have provided all the money for Coloradans for Marriage — $506,532 in donations and itemized, noncash contributions.

"It's probably on the high end of contributions I've seen," said Dana Williams, spokeswoman for the Colorado Secretary of State's Office.

The money has been used to buy ads on Colorado Springs and Denver television stations that haven't aired. Jim Pfaff, a spokesman for Colorado Family Action Issue Committee and a Focus Action official, would not say when the ads might air.

The Coloradans for Fairness Issue Committee, which opposes Amendment 43 and supports the domestic-partner initiative, received a $250,000 donation in June from gay-rights advocate Jon Stryker of Kalamazoo, Mich.

Focus is known for its conservative, Christian advice for families. It's a Christian media empire, producing books, magazines, radio programs and Web sites.

Focus founder James Dobson recently wrote: "I believe that this November's results will have a significant impact on the future of marriage in our nation. This crucial institution is under attack, but we can turn the tide — if we are registered to vote, and we go to the polls!"

Focus has donated to initiatives elsewhere, but Pfaff declined to say how much money Focus has given to various state initiatives.

Although Colorado law places limits on how much an entity can donate to candidates or political action committees, there's no limit on donations to issues committees.

The Internal Revenue Service limits how much most nonprofits can spend in direct lobbying. Focus attorney Jim Bopp says Focus' limit is $750,000.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0367 or paul.asay@gazette.com

Focus on Family faces challenge from left, IRS

THE NEW YORK TIMES

With midterm elections less than two months away, Christian conservatives are enlisting churches in eight battleground states to register voters, gather crowds for rallies and distribute voters' guides comparing the candidates' stands on issues that conservatives call "family values."

This election year, however, the religious conservatives are facing resistance from newly invigorated religious liberals and moderates who are creating their own voters' guides and are organizing events designed to challenge the conservatives' definition of "values."

Both religious flanks are looking nervously over their shoulders at the Internal Revenue Service, which this year announced a renewed effort to enforce laws that limit churches and charities from involvement in partisan political campaigns.

"We became concerned in the 2004 election cycle that we were seeing more political activity among charities, including churches," said Lois Lerner, the director for exempt organizations at the IRS. "In fact, of the organizations we looked at, we saw a very high percentage of some improper political activity, and that is really why we have ramped up the program in 2006."

The IRS issued a report in February that said nearly half of the 110 tax-exempt organizations it investigated after the 2004 elections for improper political activity were churches. Of the 40 churches that the IRS had finished investigating, 37 were found to have violated the law. These churches were given warnings or penalized with excise taxes and, although none lost their tax exemptions, the IRS is still investigating seven more cases against churches.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

Focus on the Family and its affiliates are holding pre-election rallies in Pittsburgh, St. Paul, and Nashville, but no candidates will be invited to speak.

The Colorado Springs-based group also plans to send letters, said senior vice president Tom Minnery, "laying out the issues that separate the candidates in certain major races," but he refused to say which races.

Capitalizing on the crackdown, the advocacy group Americans United for Separation of Church and State plans to begin mailing letters today to 117,000 clergymen in 11 states warning them to avoid "any activity designed to influence the outcome of a partisan election," by either supporting or opposing a particular candidate.

"The stakes for these churches are higher than ever before because of the IRS's new enforcement efforts," said the Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. He said he expected their voters' guides to be skewed to favor Republican candidates. "It's absolutely illegal, it's wrong and it divides churches," he said.

But a leader of Focus on the Family, a Colorado Springs-based conservative Christian organization whose affiliates are distributing voters' guides in eight states, said its guides would be nonpartisan and comply with IRS rules.

Tom Minnery, senior vice president for government and public policy at Focus on the Family, said, "What I see are people from the left complaining when people from the right decide they want to be citizens."

Focus on the Family, a ministry founded by James Dobson and based in Colorado Springs, has stepped into the vacuum left by the Christian Coalition, which pioneered the voters' guide tactic in churches in the 1990s under the leadership of Ralph Reed, but is now in disarray in many states.

Focus on the Family's state affiliates plan to register voters and distribute voters' guides in churches this year in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey, Minnesota, Montana, and Tennessee; all are states where Republican candidates favored by religious conservatives are on the ballot. "Our overall desire is for our constituency, generally conservative church people, to be involved citizens," Minnery said.

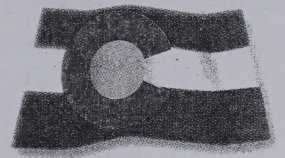
Many of the most visible groups representing religious moderates and liberals are distributing materials that do not mention the candidates.

The voters' guides distributed by two such groups — Sojourners, a predominantly evangelical organization founded by Jim Wallis, and Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good — will enumerate principles that they say religious voters should use to evaluate candidates.

Among the principles are a commitment to reducing poverty and preserving the environment and caring for immigrants: in short, the left's version of "family values."

Gay unions, marriage limits o

Some think state might approve both measures



ELECTION 2006

MORE ELECTION NEWS

Other officials have term limits, why not judges? That's the idea behind a controversial plan that will be on your ballot in November. **Metro 2**

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

Colorado might become the 21st state to use its constitution to limit marriage to the union of one man and one woman after the Nov. 7 election.

Or the state might join seven others and the District of Columbia in giving legal recognition to gay couples.

Or voters might approve both measures.

Officially acknowledging traditional marriage and creating a legal relationship for same-sex unions would be unprecedented in the United States, according to the Human Rights Campaign, a gay rights advocacy group. But such a development can't be ruled out in Colorado, given rising tolerance for gays nationwide, said Set ket, an assistant profes political science at the U sity of Denver.

"A person somewhat middle of the road cou both of these as legi ideas," Masket said.

The measures that rado voters will decide i

ONLINE > In Depth
Read all about it. Complete 2006 election coverage.
gazette.com

ELECTION: State laws on marriage common

FROM PAGE 1

riage. It's similar to 42 other state laws and a 1996 federal law. The Colorado law could be changed by the Legislature.

Supporters want to define marriage in the Colorado Constitution because only voters can change that document.

The second measure is Referendum I, establishing domestic partnerships for same-sex couples. The Legislature put the measure on the ballot in the spring. All of El Paso County's representatives at the Capitol opposed the bill, except Rep. Michael Merrifield, D-Colorado Springs.

Referendum I says domestic partnership is not the same as marriage. Supporters point to a range of federal rights granted to married couples, such as filing joint tax returns, that would be unchanged if the measure passes.

Jim Pfaff, a leader in the campaign to defeat Referendum I, said many people aren't persuaded by the measure's assertion that it's not marriage.

"We find that if people know that domestic partnerships truly intends to give all the benefits of marriage to same-sex couples, that causes people to question its necessity," he said. "To say that same-sex couples uniquely have a claim on benefits ... is discriminatory because others that may have the same need are rejected. Frankly, it's an attempt to obtain full marriage."

Pfaff is the national representative for Family Policy Councils, an organization affiliated with the Colorado Springs-based Christian ministry Focus on the Family.

Some observers have considered Colorado a vanguard in the battle over gay rights since voters here in 1992 approved Amendment 2, denying protected status to gay people. The amendment drew nationwide attention and prompted some activists to label Colorado a "hate state."

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down Amendment 2 in 1996.

Locally, battles have only simmered since then, but they've flared elsewhere in the nation. Voters in 20 states have passed constitutional amendments since 1998 banning same-sex marriage. Voters gave the measures landslide victories, with 68 percent on average voting in favor, according to the Heritage Foundation.

On a nearly parallel track, a smaller number of states have approved laws recognizing gay relationships. Hawaii was the first, in 1997, when lawmakers gave some state rights to same-sex couples, relatives and friends. Other states followed, including California, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts and Maine, as well as the District of Columbia.

In all of those cases, however, recognition of same-sex relationships came from an act of the Legislature or a court decision, not a vote of the people. That might look like a bad sign for supporters of domestic partnerships in Colorado, but Human Rights Campaign spokesman Brad Luna said shifting views about gays will also play a role.

"There's a real conversation happening in America about same-sex couples, legal recognitions, that we're going to provide, and how we move our society toward a place that's accepting and inclusive of all American families," he said.

At least one opinion poll appears to support that position. The Pew Charitable Trusts found in a poll released in August that 56 percent of Americans favor civil unions, up from 45 percent in 2003.

Luna said the changes represent a "drastic turn" in attitudes toward gays that might bode well for approval of domestic partnerships in Colorado.

"The more they hear our personal stories about our lives, the more likely it is that it would pass," he said.

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THE STATE OF MARRIAGE

- **MARRIAGE IN CONSTITUTION:** 20 state constitutions limit marriage to the union of one man and one woman.
- **GAY UNIONS:** 7 states and the District of Columbia give legal recognition to gay couples.
- **MARRIAGE IN STATE LAW:** 43 state laws define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Colorado has such a law.
- **MARRIAGE POLL:** The Pew Charitable Trusts found in a poll released in August that 56 percent of Americans opposed legal gay marriage, down from 65 percent a decade earlier.
- **CIVIL UNIONS:** The same poll found that 54 percent of Americans favor civil unions, up from 45 percent in 2003.

"GT" 9/24/06

Big firms more gay-friendly, group says

By MARILYN GEEWAX
COX NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON • Even as states have been passing constitutional amendments to ban gay marriages in recent years, a soaring number of companies have been adding domestic-partnership benefits, a gay rights advocacy group said Tuesday.

In its fifth annual survey of 446 large U.S. companies and law firms, the Human Rights Campaign, a Washington-based political organization, examined benefits and protections for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender employees and customers.

HRC ranks companies on several policies, including those involving discrimination, health benefits and family leave.

This year, HRC gave 138 major U.S. companies its top rating of 100 percent, a dramatic increase from last year's 101. When the survey began five years ago, only 13

SEE BENEFITS • PAGE 4

IN THE SPRINGS

Major employers in Colorado Springs that scored 100

- Northrop Grumman Corp.
- Wells Fargo & Co.
- Intel Corp.
- Honeywell International Inc.
- Hewlett-Packard Co.

HRC report: www.hrc.org/cei

The Gazette

BENEFITS: Coors only state-based firm to get 100

FROM PAGE 1

companies could claim a perfect score.

Colorado was one of eight states with only one headquartered company scoring 100 (Coors Brewing Co.). New York and California had the most.

HRC gave three companies a score of zero: Exxon Mobil Corp., an oil company; Perot Systems Corp., a high-tech consulting firm; and Meijer Inc., a grocery chain.

Large companies "are actively competing to be ranked the most inclusive and fair-minded in their industry," HRC president Joe Solmonese said in a statement.

He noted that last year, Raytheon Co., based in Waltham, Mass., was the only aerospace company to receive a 100 percent score. This year, three of its competitors also rose to that level.

Daryl Herrschaft, author of the HRC report, said that even companies based in conservative regions are adopting protections for gay employees. For example, Wal-Mart Stores Inc., based in Bentonville, Ark., has "made some very important first steps," boosting its score to 65 percent from last year's 57 percent.

The world's largest retailer does not offer domestic partnerships, but Herrschaft said company officials have been meeting with HRC staff because they are "genuinely interested in improving their workplace."

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The ties that divide

Gay, straight couples tell what measures mean to them

"We just want it to be a nonissue."

BLAKE OLESEN-PHELPS – who has been in a same-sex relationship for 20 years

"We have to be the silent majority, we're not allowed to speak out at all."

BRANDON SEWALL married father of 2

By **PERRY SWANSON**
THE GAZETTE

Blake and Barry Olesen-Phelps finally tied the knot in 2001 after 15 years together.

There was no proposal on bent knee preceding the ceremony, no justice of the peace officiated and the two made no trip to the county clerk seeking a license. More than 100 people gathered in a friend's backyard for the reading of vows and an original song written for the couple, "Blessed Are You."

As far as Colorado law is concerned, the service meant nothing. But the two men said their relationship is valid with or without a government endorsement.

"We always just felt like we were meant to be together," said Blake Olesen-Phelps of the couple's 20-year partnership.

Several miles across Colorado Springs, the idea of two men who were meant to be together grates on Brandon and Christina Sewall. They view homosexuality as a sin. While some people are calling for legal recognition of same-sex cou-

SEE **MARRIAGE** • PAGE 9

BRIENNE BOORTZ, THE GAZETTE

Barry, left, and his partner, Blake Olesen-Phelps, attended First Congregational Church with their sons, Bryan, 6 months, and A.J., 5.

MARRIAGE: Referendum would increas

FROM PAGE 1

ples, Christina Sewall said it's time for opponents to make a stand.

"We are the silent majority," she said. "I don't think we're the minority, I just think people are being too quiet."

Colorado voters will weigh in on the argument in the Nov. 7 election. Amendment 43 would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. A second measure, Referendum I, would establish a new legal relationship called domestic partnership, giving same-sex couples nearly every right Colorado law grants married couples.

For Blake and Barry Olesen-Phelps and their two children, Referendum I represents the potential for legal protections and responsibilities now granted to married couples. To the Sewall family, the two measures give voters the chance to affirm or weaken traditional marriage, an arrangement they

up in a Christian home. They met in a church youth group. Romance bloomed, even though Brandon Sewall was the archetypal oblivious male.

"It's one of those things. I had no clue that she liked me until I got smacked up the backside of the head," he said.

The two married in March 1996. After frequent moves during Brandon Sewall's nine-year career in the Air Force, the family settled in Colorado Springs in late 2004. They hoped to provide stability for their children, Andrew and Luke, now ages 8 and 4. Christina Sewall is a stay-at-home mom, and Brandon Sewall works in computer security.

Each partner plays an irreplaceable part in raising the children, the Sewalls said, and that's one big reason they oppose same-sex relationships.

"Boys and girls need a mom and a dad. They need to have a role model of both genders to teach them a lot of things," Christina Sewall said.

How, for instance, would a woman guide her son during puberty, they asked. How would a man advise his daughter? Books, friends and other resources could offer some help, but it's not the same.

"I know there are some great single parents," Christina Sewall said. "But even most single parents would tell you it's not the best choice. They're just doing the best they can

ant of them, but they have no tolerance for us. We have to be the silent majority, we're not allowed to speak out at all," Brandon Sewall said.

JOINT ADOPTIONS

Much about the lives of Blake and Barry Olesen-Phelps is a mirror image of married couples' lives. They live in a quiet neighborhood in central Colorado Springs, hold down jobs and attend church on Sundays.

In other ways, the Olesen-Phelps family is anything but conventional.

Blake and Barry Olesen-Phelps met while they attended college in Nebraska in 1986. They moved to Colorado Springs the same year and for eight years worked at the same company. They told few colleagues about their relationship, but people caught on.

"Everybody knew," Barry Olesen-Phelps said.

"They just didn't talk about it," his partner added.

As early as 14 years ago, a female friend offered to carry a baby for the couple. Neither partner was sure. It went back and forth — by the time one made up his mind the other had backed off.

"My doubts were with society and how the kids would be treated," Barry Olesen-Phelps said. "Growing up gay, you know how it is to hide your true self, and I didn't want to have a child go through that."

Blake Olesen-Phelps is the biological father of the couple's first child, A.J. Olesen-Phelps, who is 5. His biological mother is the family friend, Kate Drevs. Barry Olesen-Phelps is the boy's legal guardian. Colorado law does not allow for joint adoptions, although that would change if voters approve Referendum I.

This year, the couple adopted 6-month-old Bryan Olesen-Phelps from a state that allows joint adoptions.

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RANGE OF BENEFITS

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BRIENNE BOORTZ, THE GAZE

Blake, left, and Barry Olesen-Phelps, at home with their children September. Domestic partnerships would simplify many legal a rangements now available automatically to married couples.

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Headlines

October 11, 2006

Ban on discrimination sought

Gay activists' proposal unpopular with council

By ED SEALOVER THE GAZETTE

Gay and lesbian activists asked the Colorado Springs City Council on Tuesday to prevent landlords and businesses from discriminating based on sexual orientation.

Mayor Lionel Rivera referred the proposed Equal Opportunity Ordinance to the City Attorney's Office to determine whether it would duplicate state or federal laws. But a number of council members surveyed after Tuesday's meeting said either way they are not interested in passing it.

Ryan Acker, executive director of the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center, said he is aware the council isn't receptive to the idea. For the most part, this is the same council that voted in 2003 to end same-sex benefits for city employees and has refused to issue proclamations honoring the annual Pridefest.

But Acker thinks complaints that gay and lesbian residents have had leases canceled or been discriminated against while applying for jobs needs to be addressed.

"The city obviously needs a law," he said while leaving City Hall. "We want to be able to start the conversation."

Council members passed a resolution in 2003 condemning racism and discrimination based on a number of factors, including sexual orientation. Unlike Denver and Boulder, however, the city has nothing to hold businesses

MARRIAGE: Referendum would increase rights

FROM PAGE 1

ples, Christina Sewall said it's time for opponents to make a stand.

"We are the silent majority," she said. "I don't think we're the minority, I just think people are being too quiet."

Colorado voters will weigh in on the argument in the Nov. 7 election. Amendment 43 would define marriage as the union of one man and one woman. A second measure, Referendum I, would establish a new legal relationship called domestic partnership, giving same-sex couples nearly every right Colorado law grants married couples.

For Blake and Barry Olesen-Phelps and their two children, Referendum I represents the potential for legal protections and responsibilities now granted to married couples. To the Sewall family, the two measures give voters the chance to affirm or weaken traditional marriage, an arrangement they believe is critical for the healthy development of children.

Voters could endorse both ideas. Colorado law says marriage is the union of a man and a woman, but Amendment 43 would put the rule in the state constitution.

Referendum I specifies that domestic partnerships are not marriages and don't conflict with other laws. Critics contend it's just marriage by another name. But the semantic difference is enough for the two arrangements to co-exist, said University of Colorado law professor Clare Huntington.

"Even if Referendum I passed, there still would be no same-sex marriage in Colorado," she said.

TRADITIONAL ROLES

Distinct roles for men and women have always factored into Brandon and Christina Sewall's relationship. Each grew up in a Christian home. They met in a church youth group. Romance bloomed, even though Brandon Sewall was the archetypal oblivious male.

"It's one of those things. I had no clue that she liked me until I got smacked up the backside of the head," he said.

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How, for instance, would a woman guide her son during puberty, they asked. How would a man advise his daughter? Books, friends and other resources could offer some help, but it's not the same.

"I know there are some great single parents," Christina Sewall said. "But even most single parents would tell you it's not the best choice. They're just doing the best they can with the circumstances for the kids."

Even if children weren't part of the equation, the Sewalls said they oppose domestic partnerships because they view homosexual behavior as a sin.

Legal recognition of same-sex partners would be the latest of several recent affronts to traditional Christian values, such as removing displays of the Ten Commandments from courthouses and allowing sexually explicit television shows, Brandon Sewall said.

Christina Sewall worries schools might teach acceptance of same-sex partners if Referendum I passes. Subsequent steps could be recognition of other arrangements, such as polygamy, she said.

Meanwhile, the Sewalls said, people who hold a traditional Christian worldview would be sidelined.

"They want us to be tolerant of them, but they have no tolerance for us. We have to be the silent majority, we're not allowed to speak out at all," Brandon Sewall said.

JOINT ADOPTIONS

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BRIENNE BOORTZ, THE GAZETTE

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"We just want it to be a non-issue," Blake Olesen-Phelps said.

RANGE OF BENEFITS

Referendum I doesn't grant all the rights and responsibilities of marriage, mainly because it has no effect on federal laws. The federal Defense of Marriage Act, passed in 1996, says marriage can only be between a man and a woman.

Domestic partners would not be allowed to file joint tax returns or get some other tax benefits of married couples if Referendum I passes. A domestic partnership licensed in Colorado would not necessarily be recognized in another state, as marriage is.

But domestic partnerships would simplify many legal arrangements that are now available automatically to married couples. According to the Colorado Legislative Council, domestic partners would have access to a range of legal benefits such as jointly holding property, family leave from a job and protection under the state's domestic violence laws.

Even now, same-sex partners can set legal contracts establishing some of the same rights and protections as marriage. Blake and Barry Olesen-Phelps said they've spent a couple thousand dollars taking care of legal arrangements for their house, children and other issues.

"It's a lot of work on our part, where a married couple wouldn't have to do it," Blake Olesen-Phelps said.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0187 or perry.swanson@gazette.com

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Headlines

October 11, 2006

Ban on discrimination sought

Gay activists' proposal unpopular with council

By ED SEALOVER THE GAZETTE

Gay and lesbian activists asked the Colorado Springs City Council on Tuesday to prevent landlords and businesses from discriminating based on sexual orientation.

Mayor Lionel Rivera referred the proposed Equal Opportunity Ordinance to the City Attorney's Office to determine whether it would duplicate state or federal laws. But a number of council members surveyed after Tuesday's meeting said either way they are not interested in passing it.

Ryan Acker, executive director of the Pikes Peak Gay and Lesbian Community Center, said he is aware the council isn't receptive to the idea. For the most part, this is the same council that voted in 2003 to end same-sex benefits for city employees and has refused to issue proclamations honoring the annual Pridefest.

But Acker thinks complaints that gay and lesbian residents have had leases canceled or been discriminated against while applying for jobs needs to be addressed.

"The city obviously needs a law," he said while leaving City Hall. "We want to be able to start the conversation."

Council members passed a resolution in 2003 condemning racism and discrimination based on a number of factors, including sexual orientation. Unlike Denver and Boulder, however, the city has nothing to hold businesses

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and individuals to the same standards.

Acker's proposal would prevent discrimination in housing, employment, public accommodations and social services. It also would set up a process to deal with grievances.

He brought it to the council after speaking with Councilman Scott Hente, who as a member of the Urban Renewal Authority board had supported a precedent-setting nondiscrimination clause in a housing contract written earlier this year. Hente said Tuesday that he is likely to back the proposal. "I'm against discrimination, period," he said.

Other council members said they didn't think it was needed.

Councilman Tom Gallagher said if businesses don't follow federal anti-discrimination laws, he didn't think a city law would make a difference.

Councilmen Darryl Glenn and Bernie Herpin said they're not comfortable with the city imposing rules on private employers.

"I'm opposed to the city enacting an ordinance that would tell them how to hire beyond the basic federal requirements for nondiscrimination," Herpin said.

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ed.sealover@gazette.com

COMMENT ON THIS STORY (19)

w s p n n
S E N p a c i t i s
F A C a f i n f i s t e h

"Gazette" 10/16/06

'Right thing' isn't as simple as it seems

In the novel, "To Kill a Mockingbird," Atticus Finch incurs the wrath of many friends and neighbors for doing the right thing by defending Tom Robinson, a black man wrongly accused of raping a white woman. Readers see Finch as the hero of the story because he stands up for what's right, even though it puts him at odds with many in town. Standing up for what's right sometimes looks like something else, but it's never wrong to take a stand for the right things.

This page often take positions that contradict the conventional thinking on things. We'll often stand with those whose words and acts, while sometimes abhorrent, are still well within their rights. That's where we find ourselves on the recent proposal for a city law banning discrimination against gays and lesbians by landlords and business owners.

On its surface, the ban seems like the right thing to do; we don't like to see people treated unfairly for any reason. Further consideration, though, reveals that the proposed ordinance would use the power of government to infringe on the rights of landlords and business owners. Even for a noble goal, that's not acceptable.

Gays and lesbians deserve the same treatment that all people do, of course. If they are denied housing or a job, it should be because they can't afford the rent, have a poor credit history or don't have the qualifications to fill the position, rather than because of their sexual orientation.

Landlords and employers would be foolish to use someone's sexual orientation against them. They could be passing up top-quality tenants or employees in favor of less-qualified ones, based on subjective factors. That may be close-minded, but Americans also have a right to be close-minded. The city would be violating their rights by dictating such decisions.

Most gays and lesbians are good tenants and employees; if landlords and business owners don't want them, that's their loss. They're letting stupid prejudice cloud their business judgment. But the old cliche is true: two wrongs don't make a right.

10/17/06

High court rejects Scouts' challenge

Says cities can deny perks to groups that discriminate

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON • In a setback for the Boy Scouts, the Supreme Court turned away a free-speech challenge to a policy in Berkeley, Calif., that denied city-subsidized dock space to a Scouting group because it excludes gays and atheists.

The court's action lets stand rulings that have said cities, schools and colleges may deny public benefits to groups that refuse to comply with broad nondiscrimination rules involving religion and sexual orientation.

Some conservative groups had joined the challenge to the Berkeley policy, saying that advocates of "traditional moral values" are being subjected to discrimination by "politically correct" government officials.

The court's action sets no legal precedent, however, and the justices could take up the issue again.

Six years ago, the Supreme Court came to the aid of the Boy Scouts of America when it ruled a state cannot force a private group, such as the Scouts, to include openly gay men if doing so would violate its professed code of conduct.

In that case, James Dale, a former scoutmaster, had sued the group after he was excluded upon acknowledging he was gay.

The New Jersey courts said the Scouts must abide by the state's anti-discrimination law. The Supreme Court disagreed in a 5-4 decision in the case of Boys Scouts v. Dale.

But in the wake of the Scouts' victory, some cities and school districts refused to permit Scouting groups to use their facilities on the same basis as they allowed other nonprofit organizations. Lawyers for the Scouts then went back to court to challenge this exclusion as unconstitutional discrimination. So far, however, they have been rebuffed.

Bishops support Amendment 43

"GT" 10/24/06

DENVER • Roman Catholic bishops in Colorado are urging parishioners to vote in favor of a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would define marriage as a union between a man and a woman.

In a letter dated Saturday, Denver Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, Bishop Michael Sheridan of Colorado Springs and Bishop Arthur Tafoya of Pueblo urged Catholics to support Amendment 43.

They also urged Catholics to vote against Referendum I, which would allow same-sex couples to register as domestic partners and get many of the same rights as married couples under state law.

"Marriage has two natural purposes: to deepen the unity of spouses through their mutual love and to provide a loving environment for bearing and raising children," the letter said. "Anything less than a state constitutional amendment defending marriage this year will enable state judges and legislators to potentially redefine marriage — even against the will of the people. Any attack on the identity of marriage and the family undermines society itself."

The bishops suggested Referendum I would undermine "the privileged place of marriage and the family."

The bishops have written before about Catholic teachings and the voting booth. In 2004, Chaput, Sheridan and Tafoya urged Catholics to consider candidates' positions on issues like abortion when they cast their votes.

THE GAZETTE AND NEWS SERVICES

Marriage is a 'sacred' bond, president says

Friday, October 27, 2006

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES • President Bush said the "sacred institution" of marriage between a man and a woman must be defended against what he called activist court rulings.

Bush briefly brought up the topic, unprompted, while raising money here for a Republican congressional candidate, a day after the New Jersey Supreme Court decided that same-sex couples must be given the same rights as married people.

The court left it up to the state's Legislature to decide whether to extend those rights under marriage, civil unions or something else. The president said the ruling "raises doubts about the institution of marriage."

"I believe marriage is a union between a man and a woman," he said. "I believe it's a sacred institution that is critical to the health of our society and the well-being of families, and it must be defended."

Bush did not say how it must be defended, but he has advocated a federal ban on gay marriage.

N.J. may be next to usher in gay unions

By STEVENSON SWANSON
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

NEW YORK • In a ruling that could make New Jersey the second state to legalize gay marriage, the state Supreme Court said Wednesday that gay couples have the same right to the benefits of marriage as heterosexual couples.

The court, whose decision had been awaited for months by advocates on both sides of the debate about same-sex unions, said the state constitution's guarantee of equal rights applied to gay and lesbian couples, but it stopped short of ordering state officials to legalize gay marriage.

Instead, it gave the Legislature until April to amend the state's marriage statute to include same-sex couples or pass a civil-union law that provides

SEE GAY MARRIAGE • PAGE 8

NATION

GAY MARRIAGE: Ruling echoes Vermont decision

FROM PAGE 1

those couples the same benefits as marriage.

"We do not consider whether committed same-sex couples should be allowed to marry but only whether those couples are entitled to the same rights and benefits afforded to married heterosexual couples," Justice Barry Albin wrote for the 4-3 majority. "Cast in that light, the issue is not about the transformation of the traditional definition of marriage but about the unequal dispensation of benefits and privileges to one of two similarly situated classes of people."

The ruling is similar to a 1999 decision by the Vermont Supreme Court, which resulted in a civil-union law. A 2003 ruling by Massachusetts' highest court was more sweeping, making that state the first — and so far only — state with legalized gay marriage, starting in 2004.

Connecticut also allows civil unions between same-sex couples, the result of legislative action that was not prompted by a court ruling.

The case that resulted in the New Jersey ruling was brought by seven same-sex couples who were denied marriage licenses in New Jersey.

The dissenting justices, led by Chief Justice Deborah Poritz, argued the majority did not go far enough, saying only marriage would allow gay couples to achieve equal benefits. In making its ruling, the court reflected on the changes that have transformed marriage during the past 200 years, such as granting women greater rights within marriage.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Rev. Alicia Heath-Toby, left, and her companion, Saundra Toby-Heath, at the church, Liberation in Truth Unity fellowship, where she is pastor, Sept. 17 in Newark, N.J. Saundra Toby-Heath, one of the plaintiffs in the New Jersey case, said of the court: "I feel they were listening and paying attention to us as human beings who wanted to have the same rights."

"The institution of marriage reflects society's changing social mores and values," the majority said in its opinion. "Although courts can ensure equal treatment, they cannot guarantee social acceptance, which must come through the evolving ethos of a maturing society."

After setbacks earlier this year in state courts in New York, Nebraska, Washington and Georgia, gay-marriage advocates greeted Wednesday's decision with relief.

"We received a unanimous decision on one aspect, which is that all seven justices agreed that it violates the guarantee of equal protection not to give same-sex couples the same benefits as heterosexual couples," said John Davidson, legal director of the gay-rights advocacy group Lambda Legal, which argued the case on behalf of the plaintiffs. "So now the struggle in New Jersey moves to the Legislature."

Cases similar to New Jersey's are pending in California, Connecticut, Iowa and Maryland.

A June poll by Rutgers' Eagleton Institute found that New Jersey voters are almost evenly divided on gay marriage, with 49 percent of those polled supporting it and 44 percent opposed. Support for civil unions was far stronger, with 66 percent in favor and 29 percent opposed.

Issue took root in Hawaiian court in '93

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Gay marriage has been an issue in across the country for more than 15 years.

In 1993, Hawaii's Supreme Court ruled that laws denying same-sex couples the right to marry were invalid, unless the state could show a "compelling reason." That ruling began the discussion that led to passage of the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act, which bars the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages and allows states to do the same.

Today, 44 states have statues or constitutional language defining marriage.

In April 2000, Vermont became the first state to recognize civil unions, which by law provide same-sex couples with the same rights and protections granted to married couples. Connecticut followed in 2005.

In November 2003, the Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that it was unconstitutional to prohibit same-sex marriage; the state began issuing marriage licenses to gay and lesbian couples in April 2004. It remains the only state that allows same-sex marriage.

In February 2004, San Francisco officials began issuing marriage licenses to same sex couples, followed by cities in Oregon, New York, New Jersey and New Mexico. These cities were soon forced to stop issuing licenses by the courts or state officials.

California is the only state that provides almost all the rights of marriage to unmarried couples — Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey and the District of Columbia extend some spousal rights outside of marriage.

"GT" 10/26/06

Effect of ruling is anyone's guess

Gay victory is conservative rallying cry

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The New Jersey Supreme Court ruling Wednesday that ordered equal rights for same-sex couples was instantly hailed by gay-rights leaders, but it also energized their conservative adversaries, who predicted a backlash in their favor in the Nov. 7 election.

"This is a wake-up call for people who believe that marriage doesn't need constitutional protection," said Glen Lavy, senior counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, which has opposed same-sex marriage in court cases nationwide.

Bill Donohue, president of the Catholic League, called the ruling "a plus" on the premise it would stir up resentment of "arrogant judges" and boost conservatives in elections.

Eight states — Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia and Wisconsin — will vote Nov. 7 on constitutional amendments that would ban same-sex marriages and, in most cases, civil unions, too.

To conservative activists, the logic is that right-of-center voters who may have felt alienated by events like the House page scandal involving former Rep. Mark Foley will be motivated to go to the polls. And those voters will be more inclined to pull the lever for Republican candidates in key races such as that of GOP Sen. George Allen in Virginia.

Gay rights leaders disagree, saying gay marriage is not as volatile an issue as it was in the 2004 election, which took place only months after the nation's first legal gay marriages in Massachusetts.

Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign, noted that the New Jersey high court had given the state legislature 180 days to decide whether to offer same-sex couples marriage or civil unions.

"The ability of the radical right to whip their base into a frenzy is limited," Solmonese said. "Voters are angry — they're looking for their leaders to talk about issues like the war in Iraq, and aren't having any part of throwing a group of Americans out there as a wedge issue."

Evan Wolfson, a gay-rights lawyer who heads Freedom to Marry, said the eight anti-gay marriage amendments likely would have passed even without the New Jersey ruling.

"It's always been an uphill fight to defeat any of these attack measures," he said. "I don't think today's ruling will make much difference. If we see margins of defeat smaller than before, that will be sign of progress."

Twenty states have passed constitutional amendments aimed at blocking gay marriage, mostly by large margins. But gay-rights activists have nurtured hopes of breaking that streak in one or more of the eight states with marriage measures this year.

The New York Times
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October 26, 2006

EDITORIAL

A Ruling for Equality in New Jersey

The New Jersey Supreme Court brought the United States a little closer to the ideal of equality yesterday when it ruled that the state's Constitution requires that committed same-sex couples be accorded the same rights as married heterosexual couples. It stopped short, however, of ruling that same-sex couples have a right to "marry," leaving the question of what to call same-sex unions up to the State Legislature.

That omission will disappoint some gay-rights advocates, but there is no reason for lawmakers not to apply the term marriage to these committed relationships, and they should do so swiftly. Meanwhile, the court decision is an important step forward.

New Jersey already has a civil-unions law, but it gives same-sex couples fewer rights than married couples. Same-sex couples are penalized financially, in areas like employer-provided health benefits and inheritance taxes. They are also disadvantaged socially and in practical, day-to-day ways. One of the plaintiffs in the case had trouble getting her partner into a hospital emergency room with her when she was sick.

The court required the Legislature to level the playing field in every respect but one. It said lawmakers can call relationships between partners of the same sex marriage, or something else. This page supports gay marriage, but we also know it will not be recognized instantly. New Jersey's delay is unfortunate, but at least it makes it hard for anti-gay forces in the state to mobilize against the decision. The court ruling secures important rights, and paves the way for the full equality that will no doubt come.

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"GT" 10/27/06

The Rev. Benjamin Reynolds, shown in 2003, said his stance on gay and lesbian issues caused friction with some at his Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church.

CAROL LAWRENCE, THE GAZETTE

Gay pastor feels compelled to give up post

By PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE

The Rev. Benjamin Reynolds, senior pastor of Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church and one of Colorado Springs' leading civil rights advocates, will step away from the pulpit Sunday, a few weeks after telling his congregation he is gay.

Reynolds, a longtime advocate for gay and lesbian rights, revealed his sexual identity during a church meeting last month. He announced his resignation during the same meeting.

"It's not really a happy leaving," Reynolds said Thursday.

According to Deacon Kevin Hagans, Emmanuel's director of operations, many church congregants feel that homosexuality runs counter to the Christian doctrines.

"The church and Pastor Reynolds have a different view as far as homosexuality goes," Hagans said.

The 500-member church has not named a successor, Hagans said.

Reynolds, 45, grew up in Emmanuel Baptist and started preaching there when he was 14. He's been the church's senior pastor for nearly 16 years.

SEE PASTOR • PAGE 7

PASTOR: 'Black church has a long way to go'

FROM PAGE 1

Reynolds was president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for more than two years, stepping down from that post in 2005.

But Reynolds' stance on gay issues — including making Emmanuel Baptist an "open and affirming" congregation for gays and lesbians — rubbed many of his congregants the wrong way, he said. That friction, not his sexual orientation, is what caused him to resign, he said.

Reynolds said it would have been difficult for him to remain once he revealed that he was gay, however.

"I think the black church has a long way to go in this area," he said. "The oppressed, when they feel a place where they're free, they'll find others who they'll oppress."

Reynolds said part of the reason why he told his congregants he was gay was to personalize the pressing theological, social and political issues that revolve around sexuality.

He said he knows he's "considered an outcast now," but added that members of Emmanuel Baptist have been "as supportive as they can be."

Reynolds said he doubts he'll stay in Colorado Springs and plans to take doctorate-level theology classes, possibly at the Iliff School of Theology in Denver. He says he has a "pastor's heart," and would like to return to a pulpit.

"I've not lost sight of my faith," he said.

Reynolds' last service will be at 10 a.m. Sunday at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, 1 S. Walnut St.

"GT" 10/30/06

ASAY'S VIEW

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CHUCK ASAY, THE GAZETTE

Referendum I

Measure protects rights of same-sex couples

By SEAN DUFFY

A conservative Republican backing a referendum to provide basic legal rights for same-sex couples?

It was an easy choice for me to sign on to run the campaign for Referendum I, which passed the Legislature this year with a bipartisan majority, because it's a reasonable and common-sense route to providing committed same-sex couples with basic legal protections and responsibilities — without authorizing gay marriage.

And, according to a recent study from UCLA, it will boost Colorado's economy and make money for our state budget.

Referendum I would permit committed couples to go to the county courthouse, pay a fee and receive a government license that provides them with such basic protections as the automatic right to visit a partner in the hospital, make end-of-life decisions and address property and inheritance rights.

Some assume that all these protections could be obtained with legal documents. I wish it were that easy. The best contracts can't provide such things as workers' compensation, child support or health insurance.

Duffy

even when couples take the expensive step of drawing up an estate plan, any will or power of attorney can be challenged in court. Referendum I closes those gaps in the law, and many more.

Unfortunately, our opponents have spent quite a bit of time and money trying to convince Coloradans that Referendum I is gay marriage. That's just factually false, and lets them duck a discussion of the basic decency and compassion at the heart of the measure. Here's why a read through the text of Referendum I demonstrates it's not marriage.

First, there's page 78 of the blue book sent to every voter. It states that Referendum I isn't gay marriage and doesn't change the current definition of marriage in state law. But, more substantively, unlike with a marriage, the benefits and protections under Referendum I are not portable to other states. Referendum I won't require Colorado to recognize gay marriages from other states. And Colorado domestic partners will not be able to file a joint tax return, nor will they be eligible for the more than 1,100 federal benefits provided

Measure pos to traditiona

By MICHAEL J. SHERIDAN

Marriage is an old institution. The laws protecting marriage and spouses have developed over a very long period of time. We have laws governing divorce and custody issues. We have laws excluding some persons from marriage because of their age or kinship. Spouses receive benefits under employment laws related to medical insurance, workers' compensation, retirement benefits and family leave. All of these laws root themselves in a long history of human experience.

But Referendum I would endanger that by eclipsing centuries of our developed understanding about marriage in a single election and creating — in effect — a parallel track of marriage-like relationships.

Obviously, not everyone chooses to marry, and especially today, not every marriage succeeds. But that doesn't change the witness of history and its facts. Marriage is the foundation of society because it protects the family, particularly women and children. The uniquely privileged place of marriage ensures a culture's future.

The most damaging problem with Referendum I is its sweep. This one proposed law changes every "statute, administrative or

Haggard told reporters he bought meth but never used it; he said he received a massage from Jones after being referred to him by a Denver hotel. Jones said that no hotel referred Haggard and that he advertises only in gay publications.

In a TV interview this week, Haggard said: "Never had a gay relationship with anybody, and I'm steady with my wife, I'm faithful to my wife."

Church member Christine Rayes, 47, said the congregation had hoped the allegations "were all lies."

"We all have to move forward now," she said. "This doesn't make what Ted accomplished here any less. The farther up you are, the more you are a target for Satan."

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Referendum I

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And, according to a recent study from UCLA, it will boost Colorado's economy and make money for our state budget.

Referendum I would permit committed couples to go to the county courthouse, pay a fee and receive a government license that provides them with such basic protections as the automatic right to visit a partner in the hospital, make end-of-life decisions and address property and inheritance rights.

Some assume that all these protections could be obtained with legal documents. I wish it were that easy. The best contracts can't provide such things as workers' compensation, child support or health insurance.

Take workers' compensation, for example. If a worker is killed on the job, state law says death benefits can be paid only to the surviving spouse and dependent children. The result, for a committed same-sex couple, is that the surviving partner and children are not only grieving a death, but could also face the prospect of losing their home and possessions due to the drop in financial support. No legal contract can overcome this gap in the law. We must pass Referendum I to take that step forward.

While each of us, straight or gay, should create an estate plan, statistics show that 60 percent of us don't take that expensive and emotional step. So, how does the law treat those people? When a straight, married person, like me, dies without a will or ends up incapacitated in the hospital without a medical power of attorney, our state law says that one's spouse is in charge. Yet for a same-sex couple, who by law cannot marry, the law is broken.

If a gay person dies without a will, it is much more likely that her property will go to the government than to her partner. That doesn't pass the common-sense test. And, even when couples take the expensive step of drawing up an estate plan, any will or power of attorney can be challenged in court. Referendum I closes those gaps in the law, and many more.

Duffy

Unfortunately, our opponents have spent quite a bit of time and money trying to convince Coloradans that Referendum I is gay marriage. That's just factually false, and lets them duck a discussion of the basic decency and compassion at the heart of the measure. Here's why a read through the text of Referendum I demonstrates it's not marriage.

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While Referendum I most definitely isn't gay marriage, another measure on the ballot — Amendment 43 — does asks voters to constitutionally ban gay marriage. What most people may not realize is that there is already a legal ban on gay marriage, so it's not clear that 43 would accomplish anything, other than enshrining discrimination in our Constitution. It's a bad idea, and should be defeated.

An interesting fact about this election, though, is that both Referendum I and Amendment 43 could pass and both can legally co-exist. Why? Because Referendum I isn't gay marriage. In fact, many people have told me they just might vote for both.

More and more Coloradans are embracing the common-sense provisions of Referendum I. It encourages commitment and responsibility. It provides basic legal rights, including those that aren't available through contracts. And it accomplishes all that without authorizing gay marriage.

It's so good even a conservative Republican can support it, with enthusiasm.

Duffy is the executive director of Coloradans for Fairness (www.fairequal.org).

Measure poses threat to traditional marriage

By MICHAEL J. SHERIDAN

Marriage is an old institution. The laws protecting marriage and spouses have developed over a very long period of time. We have laws governing divorce and custody issues. We have laws excluding some persons from marriage because of their age or kinship. Spouses receive benefits under employment laws related to medical insurance, workers' compensation, retirement benefits and family leave. All of these laws root themselves in a long history of human experience.

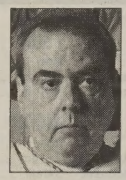
But Referendum I would endanger that by eclipsing centuries of our developed understanding about marriage in a single election and creating — in effect — a parallel track of marriage-like relationships.

Obviously, not everyone chooses to marry, and especially today, not every marriage succeeds. But that doesn't change the witness of history and its facts. Marriage is the foundation of society because it protects the family, particularly women and children. The uniquely privileged place of marriage ensures a culture's future.

The most damaging problem with Referendum I is its sweep. This one proposed law changes every "statute, administrative or court rule, policy, common law, or any other source of civil law" regulating marriage or spouses. Referendum I is so broad that many citizens may decide to support it without grasping its serious long-term impact. Because of the referendum's scope and tangled complexity, public discussion of Referendum I is strangely devoid of its real effects. Backers of Referendum I use deceptive sloganeering because they know very well that it would make domestic partnerships equivalent to marriage in everything but the name.

Colorado employment law now provides a cause of action against employers that "discharge . . . or refuse to hire a person solely on the basis that such employee or person is married or plans to marry another employee of the employer." The statute states that "spouses" can bring a claim for violation of this law. Referendum I redefines "spouses" to include "domestic partners."

Now, while some employers will not care if one employee joins another in a domestic partnership, others do care — deeply. Most church-related employers in Colorado, for example, teach that sexual activity should be limited to the marriage of one man and one woman. If Referendum I passes, it will jeopardize the freedom of religious communities, guaranteed by the First Amendment, to engage like-minded persons to advance a community's religious beliefs and mission.



Sheridan

Some may argue that the problem is small because religious organizations are exempt from the definition of "employer" under the Colorado Spousal Discrimination Act. But church-related employers already know that this exemption may be lost if they cooperate with government by providing faith-based social services supported by government funding. One potential and particularly devious effect of Referendum I will be to force religious organizations participating in charitable choice programs to surrender their freedom to hire only those workers who hold the same religious and moral convictions.

Referendum I is bad law and seriously disruptive law. Plenty of reasons exist to oppose it. But even those Coloradans willing to take a laissez-faire attitude toward single-sex unions should recognize that churches and other religious institutions participating in government programs should not be forced to hire workers who model beliefs and conduct that directly oppose their religious convictions.

Referendum I creates a seemingly modest but in fact dangerous precedent in jeopardizing the freedom of religious communities and institutions. James Madison recognized that religious freedom is the most distinctive characteristic of American government. That freedom should not be compromised for a referendum that is too broad in scope and not necessary to ensure anyone's basic rights.

When supporters claim that Referendum I is not marriage, they may, in the narrowest legal sense, be right. But since the referendum assigns nearly all the privileges, rights and protections of marriage to an entirely new legal structure, this is a distinction without a difference. Colorado voters should think very carefully about the social and legal consequences of enacting this ballot item. Law not only reflects the will of a people, it also teaches their children. If Referendum I passes, Coloradans will get a lot more than they ever bargained for.

Sheridan is bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Colorado Springs.

Haggard told reporters he bought meth but never used it; he said he received a massage from Jones after being referred to him by a Denver hotel. Jones said that no hotel referred Haggard and that he advertises only in gay publications.

In a TV interview this week, Haggard said: "Never had a gay relationship with anybody, and I'm steady with my wife, I'm faithful to my wife."

Church member Christine Rayes, 47, said the congregation had hoped the allegations "were all lies."

"We all have to move forward now," she said. "This doesn't make what Ted accomplished here any less. The farther up you are, the more you are a target for Satan."

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HAGGARD'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH

The following letter from Ted Haggard, former senior pastor of New Life Church, was read to the congregation this morning at the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services.

To my New Life Church family:

I am so sorry. I am sorry for the disappointment, the betrayal, and the hurt. I am sorry for the horrible example I have set for you.

I have an overwhelming, all-consuming sadness in my heart for the pain that you and I and my family have experienced over the past few days. I am so sorry for the circumstances that have caused shame and embarrassment to all of you.

I asked that this note be read to you this morning so I could clarify my heart's condition to you. The last four days have been so difficult for me, my family and all of you, and I have further confused the situation with some of the things I've said during interviews with reporters who would catch me coming or going from my home. But I alone am responsible for the confusion caused by my inconsistent statements. The fact is, I am guilty of sexual immorality, and I take responsibility for the entire problem.

I am a deceiver and a liar. There is a part of my life that is so repulsive and dark that I've been warring against it all of my adult life.

For extended periods of time, I would enjoy victory and rejoice in freedom. Then, from time to time, the dirt that I thought was gone would resurface, and I would find myself thinking thoughts and experiencing desires that were contrary to everything I believe and teach.

Through the years, I've sought assistance in a variety of ways, with none of them proving to be effective in me. Then, because of pride, I began deceiving those I love the most because I didn't want to hurt or disappoint them.

The public person I was wasn't a lie; it was just incomplete. When I stopped communicating about my problems, the darkness increased and finally dominated me. As a result, I did things that were contrary to everything I believe.

The accusations that have been leveled against me are not all true, but enough of them are true that I have been appropriately and lovingly removed from ministry. Our church's overseers have required me to submit to the oversight of Dr. James Dobson, Pastor Jack Hayford and Pastor Tommy Barnett. Those men will perform a thorough analysis of my mental, spiritual, emotional and physical life. They will guide me through a program with the goal of healing and restoration for my life, my marriage and my family.

I created this entire situation. The things that I did opened the door for additional allegations. But I am responsible; I alone need to be disciplined and corrected. An example must be set.

It is important that you know how much I love and appreciate my wife, Gayle. What I did should never reflect in a negative way on her relationship with me. She has been and continues to be incredible. The problem is not with her, my children or any of you. It was created 100 percent by me.

I have been permanently removed from the office of senior pastor of New Life Church. Until a new senior pastor is chosen, our associate senior pastor, Ross Parsley, will assume all of the responsibilities of the office. On the day he accepted this new role, he and his wife, Aimee, had a new baby boy. A new life in the midst of this circumstance – I consider the confluence of events to be prophetic. Please commit to join with Pastor Ross and the others in church leadership to make their service to you easy and without burden. They are fine leaders. You are blessed.

I appreciate your loving and forgiving nature, and I humbly ask you to do a few things.

1. Please stay faithful to God through service and giving.

2. Please forgive me. I am so embarrassed and ashamed. I caused this and I have no excuse. I am a sinner. I have fallen. I desperately need to be forgiven and healed.

3. Please forgive my accuser. He is revealing the deception and sensuality that was in my life. Those sins, and others, need to be dealt with harshly. So forgive him and, actually, thank God for him. I am trusting that his action will make me, my wife and family, and ultimately all of you, stronger. He didn't violate you; I did.

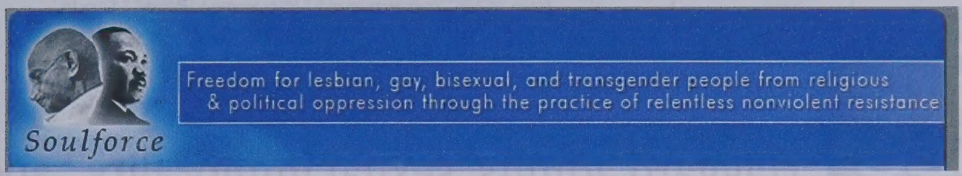
4.) Please stay faithful to each other. Perform your functions well. Encourage each other and rejoice in God's faithfulness. Our church body is a beautiful body, and like every family, our strength is tested and proven in the midst of adversity. Because of the negative publicity I've created with my foolishness, we can now demonstrate to the world how our sick and wounded can be healed, and how even disappointed and betrayed church bodies can prosper and rejoice.

Gayle and I need to be gone for a while. We will never return to a leadership role at New Life Church. In our hearts, we will always be members of this body. We love you as our family. I know this situation will put you to the test. I'm sorry I've created the test, but please rise to this challenge and demonstrate the incredible grace that is available to all of us.

Ted Haggard

Robert Armintor

From: "Soulforce" <journey@soulforce.org>
To:
Sent: Monday, November 06, 2006 3:41 PM
Subject: Soulforce Urges Compassion for Haggard and Accountability for the National Association of Evangelicals


Soulforce
Freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious & political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance

Soulforce Urges Compassion for Haggard and Accountability for the National Association of Evangelicals

(Austin, TX) -- In response to the news that Rev. Ted Haggard has been dismissed by New Life Church and resigned as President of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), Soulforce Executive Director Jeff Lutes urged the gay community to be compassionate and simultaneously called on the leaders of the NAE to claim responsibility for their role in the crisis.

"Rev. Haggard is just one more tragic example of how lives are destroyed by the lies about gay and lesbian people perpetuated by the NAE, the Religious Right, and both the Protestant and Roman Catholic Church. Taught by the church to hate himself, the only option from his point of view was to lead a psychologically and spiritually damaging double life marked by denial and self-destructive behavior. Rev. Haggard is a victim of religion-based bigotry that regularly demeans and demoralizes gay and lesbian people and refuses to acknowledge that we are part of the American fabric, and that many of us form loving families and practice a deep faith in God."

The NAE holds that "homosexuality is a deviation from the Creator's plan for human sexuality." In a 2004 policy statement, the organization opposes legislation that would protect gays and lesbians from hate crimes or employment discrimination on the grounds that "such legislation inevitably is perceived as legitimatizing [sic] the practice of homosexuality and elevates that practice to a level of an accepted moral standard."

Haggard submitted his resignation as President of the NAE on Thursday, shortly after allegations of homosexual activity were aired on Denver talk radio. On Saturday, Haggard was removed as pastor of New Life Church in Colorado Springs. In a letter to his congregation, Haggard wrote "there's a part of my life that is so repulsive and dark that I have been warring against it for all my adult life." He also wrote that the church's overseers have required him to "submit to the oversight of Dr. James Dobson, Pastor Jack Hayford, and Pastor Tommy Barnett. Those men will perform a thorough analysis of my mental, spiritual, emotional and physical life. They will guide me through a program with the goal of healing and restoration for my life, my marriage, and my family."

In reaction to the unfolding events, Lutes said "Our community's anger at Rev. Haggard's

hypocrisy is completely understandable. However, my hope is that our community will take the high road and extend an olive branch of friendship and support when he is ready to fully come out as a gay man. Dobson and the others will counsel him to bury, deny, and repress his sexuality even deeper than before. They will wound his spirit, and he is going to need our prayers and our compassionate message that God loves him, affirms him, and calls him to live his life openly with honesty and integrity."

The goal of Soulforce is freedom for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from religious and political oppression through the practice of relentless nonviolent resistance.

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Soulforce, Inc., P.O. Box 3195, Lynchburg, VA 24503

MORE COVERAGE

HELEN D. RICHARDSON, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Rev. Larry Stockstill, senior pastor of Bethany World Prayer Center in Baker, La., spoke to New Life Church members at services Sunday.

ONLINE

- Audio from the church board of overseers' message to the congregation Sunday
- A slide show of pictures and comments from Sunday's services at New Life Church
- Full text of letters from Ted Haggard's wife, Gayle, and the church's board of overseers
- All the Haggard/New Life news from the past few days

"GT" 11/6/06

Preachers respond with prayer, worry, empathy

By DEEDEE CORRELL
THE GAZETTE

The Presbyterian worried aloud Sunday about the future of Christianity.

The evangelical said he had sin in his heart, too. The Episcopalian said nothing at all.

And the pastor of the predominantly gay Pikes Peak Metropolitan Church invited Ted Haggard to join.

Around Colorado Springs, church leaders dealt with the Rev. Ted Haggard's fall from New Life Church's pulpit in ways as different as their theologies.

"We have said, 'You are welcome here anytime. You can come here,'" said the Rev. Dan Koeshall of Metropolitan. Koeshall's old church fired him nine years ago when it learned he was gay.

"How can a community so quickly disregard and cast someone aside?" he asked.

Koeshall led his congregation in praying for Haggard to "embrace all of who he is, not to hate part of himself."

"Many of us have lived lives in the closet," he said. "You know how unhealthy that is."

Others at the church said they have an idea of what Haggard might be going through.

"I just hope he can learn to love himself and let God love him," said Sharon Shott of Pikes Peak Metropolitan. "There's no other way you can make it. He's going to beat himself up, I'm sure."

Across town, other Christians spoke of healing — but in the context of forgiving someone who has committed a grievous sin and acknowledging their own potential for sin.

At Woodmen Valley Chapel, a nondenominational, evangelical church that, like New Life, has thousands of members, senior pastor Matt Heard devoted the entire 11 a.m. service to the subject of Haggard.

"As you and I stand together, don't you dare look at Ted with anything but humility," Heard said. Everyone has shame and confusion inside, he said.

"I know my heart," he said, "and I know a TV crew, if it came into my heart, would have a story."

"Does the body of Christ in Colorado Springs have a future? True or false?" he asked.

"True!" came the loud response.

"Do Ted and Gayle Haggard have a future?"

"Yes!"

At Grace Episcopal and St. Stephen's Church downtown, no one at the pulpit spoke of Haggard at all.

Haggard's name wasn't mentioned at Freedom Church, either, although the congregation included a family that left New Life this week, in part because of the turmoil over Haggard.

"When the smoke clears, we might go back," said Rod Reinhart, who said his family had attended for a month and a half.

At First Presbyterian Church downtown, the Rev. Jim Singleton told congregants at three packed services to pray for New Life Church and its former pastor.

"I think we've been stunned, hurt and blindsided," said Singleton, who compared the events of the past few days to the children's book "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day."

He said he was worried that what he regarded as Haggard's hypocrisy could cast a pall on the entire Christian community in Colorado Springs.

"I think it hurt the body of Christ," he said.

The Haggard matter came up only briefly at Village Seven Presbyterian Church, whose members include high-profile supporters of Amendment 2, the 1992 measure that would have prohibited laws protecting gays from discrimination.

"We pray for Ted, that he is granted full redemption," the Rev. Kevin Allen said.

At the liberal First Congregational Church, one of the first in the city to bless same-sex unions, the Rev. Benjamin Broadbent didn't see Haggard as requiring redemption, but rather requiring acceptance.

The church "knows stories like his and celebrates human sexuality in all its forms," Broadbent said.

He referred to the "dehumanizing" effects of prejudice and spoke of the damage that results "when we are not given the permission or the space to fully express who we are."

Later, Broadbent led the congregation in a prayer for Haggard.

"I pray for the pain that we now know has been part of his life for years," Broadbent said.

And like his counterpart at Pikes Peak Metropolitan Church, he extended an invitation to Haggard.

"I left a message on his voice mail asking him to come worship with us," he said.

Staff writers Cary Leider Vogrin, Perry Swanson, Tom Roeder, Anthony Lane and Bill McKeown contributed to this report.

BRIENNE BOORTZ, THE GAZETTE

The Rev. Dan Koeshall of Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church prayed that the Rev. Ted Haggard "embrace all of who he is."

"GT" 11/9/06

ED ANDRIESKI, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bill Ritter, who in September said he would approve a law recognizing gay couples even if voters rejected the idea in Tuesday's election, was asked Wednesday about his stance on gay issues. "I think the voice of the people is fairly clear," he said.

Ritter won't back bill to recognize gay couples

By PERRY SWANSON
THE GAZETTE

Colorado's debate over legal recognition of gay couples appears over for now as Gov.-elect Bill Ritter on Wednesday backed off an earlier statement in support of domestic partnerships.

Ritter told The Gazette's editorial board Sept. 27 he would approve a law recognizing gay couples even if voters rejected the idea in Tuesday's election. Referendum I, which would have established domestic partnerships for gay couples, failed with 53 percent statewide voting "no." State voters also approved a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage.

The Legislature could create domestic partnerships without an election, but only voters can change the state constitution. Asked Wednesday whether he would support a bill granting domestic partnerships or reversing the same-sex marriage ban, Ritter said: "I think the people have spoken on both those issues. I think the voice of the people is fairly clear."

In El Paso County, 65 percent of voters opposed Referendum I. Nationally, voters in seven states including Colorado approved constitutional amendments banning same-sex marriage. Arizona voters defeated a measure banning same-sex marriage.

Colorado was the only state to ask voters whether to recognize gay couples.

Resurrecting Referendum I in the form of a bill at the Legislature would be a slap to voters, said Jim Pfaff of Colorado Family Action, an organization that opposed the measure. Referendum I said domestic partnership is not the same as marriage, but opponents argued it was gay marriage by a different name.

"It would be unfortunate if this Legislature decided to go right into the face of the will of the people of Colorado, who have spoken clearly that they don't want counterfeit marriage," Pfaff said.

Rep. Michael Merrifield, D-Colorado Springs, said he would support a new law along the lines of Referendum I even after the measure's defeat at the polls. Merrifield was the only El Paso County representative at the Capitol who voted in favor of sending Referendum I to voters.

"I would be a strong supporter of it and am disappointed that it didn't pass this time," Merrifield said. "Colorado voters have said no about a lot of issues the first time around, and as they've studied it and it's been adjusted and come back, they've changed their minds."

Coloradans for Fairness, the main organization backing Referendum I, acknowledged defeat Wednesday but said its efforts weren't for nothing.

"We educated Colorado voters about the significant legal rights at stake in the marriage debate," said Executive Director Sean Duffy in a statement.

"CT" 11/8/06

Dobson quits Haggard team

Says he doesn't have time for counseling role

By PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE

HAGGARD'S SUCCESSOR: New Life members must approve new pastor. **Page 7**

James Dobson has decided not to counsel the Rev. Ted Haggard after all.

Dobson, chairman of the powerful Springs-based organization Focus on the Family, initially agreed to be part of the team that will counsel Haggard after Haggard's dismissal from New Life Church. Haggard was fired after allegations surfaced that he had a three-year sexual relationship with another man and used illegal drugs.

Tuesday, Dobson said he was dropping out of the process.

"It is with great regret — and after much prayer and discussion with friends and family — that I have had to reconsider my involvement in the panel overseeing Ted's restoration," Dobson said in a written statement. "Emotionally and spiritually, I wanted to be of help — but the reality is I don't have the time to devote to such a critical responsibility."

Dobson and Haggard are Colorado Springs' two best-known spiritual leaders. Both were named to Time Magazine's list of the top 25 most influential evangelicals and have played major roles in conserva-

SEE DOBSON • PAGE 7

The Gazette

Haggard support after accusations

FROM PAGE 1

tive political circles. Haggard, shortly after he founded New Life Church in 1985, prayed over the vacant lot on which Focus was eventually built, asking for the future buyers to be godly people.

Both have said several times that homosexuality is a sin.

After word came out that some of the accusations against Haggard were true, Dobson said in a statement that Haggard "will continue to be my friend, even if the worst allegations prove accurate. Nevertheless, sexual sin, whether homosexual or heterosexual, has serious consequences and we are extremely concerned for Ted, his family and his church."

The restoration is designed to help Haggard recover mentally and spiritually from what church leaders call his sins. Although it's unclear what Haggard did, the board that fired Haggard learned he received massages from a male escort and bought drugs illegally. In addition, Haggard had "developed a pattern of deception," according to the Rev. Larry Stockstill, who led the board. Part of the restoration will include a more thorough examination of Haggard's reported wrongdoings, Stockstill said Sunday.

The restoration is important. Christian leaders said they don't want to desert one of their wayward members, and many believe Haggard still has an important role to play in the evangelical movement.

"One day Pastor Ted will bless the world again," Stockstill told New Life congregants Sunday.

But the Rev. Tommy Barnett, one of two leaders named as part of Haggard's restoration team, said in a statement its focus will be on "personal restoration and not on a return to ministry."

"He is seeking intensive mental and spiritual counseling, and my prayer is that now (that) these issues have been exposed, we can be instrumental in bringing healing," Barnett said.

CONTACT THE WRITER: 636-0367 or paul.asay@gazette.com

Letters

"GT" 11/8/06

FALL FROM GRACE

Neo-con evangelicals don't lead by example

I guess the flock is willing to forgive and forget in the matter of Ted Haggard. They all seem ready to pat him on the back and continue as if nothing happened. That doesn't mean the rest of us are.

If the church isn't willing to publicly address the hypocrisy, maybe others should.

We have a bunch of neo-conservatives who think so much of the image they project, they've lost their objectivity. They want everybody around them to act just as they act, believe in the same things they believe in, and express the same misguided morality they do. Only then are they ready to accord the same rights they enjoy to others, and only to the people who emulate their projected image. Their haughtiness is insulting.

To them I say, I don't need your religion or a book that was written when the world was flat to enlighten me as to what is morally right and how to treat my neighbor. I am a freethinker. If you truly believe your Bible is the correct blueprint for our society, if you truly think your Bible should be incorporated into our Constitution, then tell me you believe in everything the Bible says. Every word on every page, Old Testament and New, no exceptions.

Then look closely, very closely, at the people you let be your leaders.

I thought true Christian leadership was supposed to teach by example, living lives of charity, compassion and tolerance. Instead I see small, petty people who live in splendor, meddle in the politics of the nation and crusade for intolerance. I see neo-conservatives who relentlessly stomp on the Constitution as if it were little more than an old doormat. This isn't what the framers of this country meant it to be.

This is about a profoundly corrupt and broken system of leadership in religion, government and society overall; leadership that is dominated by hypocrites, bigots, liars and xenophobes. Pervasive corruption, hypocrisy and immorality among our political, religious and community leaders is an American crisis.

Scot Yates
Colorado Springs

Compassionate theology could have saved Haggard

I don't see this as a gay issue, only one man's attempt at self-indulgence. Yes, this will have profound effects on all of us, at least as far as we let it. The media will run this story for weeks, if not months. Jones will get his 15 minutes of fame and I'm sure will become a fixture on the talk-show circuit. He will leave a high body count in his wake.

Human beings make mistakes; Haggard is no exception. The final judgment is not ours. Let's pick up the pieces and move forward as a community and as human beings. It's amazing how far a little forgiveness goes.

Mike Fisch
Colorado Springs

Perhaps Haggard is God's greatest sermon

The recent unfortunate news about the Rev. Ted Haggard will be misinterpreted by many. They will say that he was a bad man or that he was weak. Haggard himself may fall prey to such conclusions. But we should see Haggard as an instrument of God's will.

Nothing he has done can take away the help and good things he has done for countless people. By exposing the reverend's behavior at this crucial time, it is clear God is using his instrument for his greatest sermon. A homosexual can still help people. A meth user can help people. While many will be inclined to renounce Haggard, the good he did for so many can never be taken away.

God wants us to know it is wrong to persecute people for their sexual orientation. It is wrong to persecute them for the chemicals they ingest. Their goodness derives from the good they do to others, and Haggard's actions caused no harm to anyone.

Haggard is the Lord's vehicle for a mighty sermon of tolerance. Let us hope this sermon is heard.

L.L. Williams
Colorado Springs

'Pastor' was used to push political agenda

"Pastor" Ted Haggard stopped being a pastor years ago when he became a member of the Republican power broker club. He wasn't on a weekly call with Karl Rove to give him spiritual guidance. Rove wanted to keep his finger on the pulse of the issues of most importance to evangelical

"GT" 11/8/06

Flap about gays in Houston jolts many

LOS ANGELES TIMES

HOUSTON • The co-owner of a landscaping company here called Garden Guy turned down a job in October by sending an e-mail to a man who had requested an estimate for work on his yard:

"I am appreciative of your time on the phone today and glad you contacted us," Sabrina Farber wrote. "I need to tell you that we cannot meet with you because we choose not to work with homosexuals. Best of luck in finding someone else to fill your landscaping needs. All the best."

Floored, the recipient of the e-mail, Michael Lord, and his partner forwarded the message to dozens of friends. Within days the e-mail had spread across the Internet to bloggers, the homosexual media and online gardening forums.

Farber and her husband, Todd, who've owned the landscaping company since 1991, were bombarded with profane phone calls and e-mails. Their online forum flooded with outraged posts.

"It blackens my mind to think that an alternative version of the KKK is alive & kicking in the USA," read one of the milder comments.

The Farbers released a statement saying they "do not hate homosexuals" and "did not refuse service with malicious intent. ... We meant to uphold our right as small-business owners to choose who our clients are. We are humbly sorry for the hurt that it has caused."

The episode was a jolt to many in Houston, where gays and lesbians have enjoyed increasing acceptance over the years. Despite the city's conservative reputation, there's been a significant shift in support of gay rights here, said Jack Valinski, executive director of Pride Houston, a gay-rights group.

"The e-mail was an aberration," Valinski said. "People may want to discriminate, but they're not blatant and public about it like they were before."

Gay and lesbian activist Carol Wyatt said she's "not surprised by homophobia, but that this woman thought it was socially acceptable to write about it in an e-mail. We've come a long way in Houston in terms of tolerance and acceptance. For this to bubble up is embarrassing for a lot of people who care about this city."

There have been no threats of legal action. But Valinski said activists may push for an anti-discrimination ordinance that prevents businesses from rejecting customers based on sexual orientation.

The Farbers are clear about their convictions in a "Learn About Garden Guy" page of their Web site (www.gardenguy.com). "The God-ordained institution of marriage is under attack in courts across the nation, and your help is needed," reads a tagline above a link to nogaymarriage.com.

Letters

"GT" 11/8/06

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Scot Yates
Colorado Springs

Compassionate theology could have saved Haggard

If there's one lesson to take away from the Ted Haggard scandal, it should be that "you are who you are." If a man like Haggard, a true believer with so much to lose, cannot turn away from his biological nature, then how should any gay person be expected to do otherwise? When people are made to feel ashamed and guilty for whom they are, healthy instincts are driven underground into unhealthy outlets.

It's sad to realize that rather than "warring against it all of my adult life," Haggard might have been a happy, well-adjusted gay man — even the pastor of a congregation if he had embraced himself and his religion had supported him. It's time conservative Christians take a closer look at their belief in the sin of homosexuality.

Conservative theology allows Christian leaders to cherry-pick which passages in the Bible will be held as sacred dogma and which ones will be considered antiquated rules of a bygone culture. The Bible offers no internal guidance to tell the difference. Declaring homosexuality a sin ought to be considered as morally outmoded as the biblical prescription to keep slaves (Leviticus 25: 44-46, 1 Timothy 6:1-4) or to stone your wife on your wedding night if she is not a virgin (Deuteronomy 22:20).

A more compassionate and truly moral theology could have saved Haggard such deep embarrassment and suffering.

Jill McCormick
Colorado Springs

Pastor touched many lives, regardless of his demons

In the fervor and all of the media attention, many have forgotten that New Life Church is a house of God and Pastor Ted Haggard is a man. The focus has been strong on Haggard and moved from the reason for this church.

Many throughout history have been sacrificed to bring people back to God and I believe this is Haggard's fate. The incredible pressures of the day-to-day operations and responsibilities of such a massive congregation must be beyond overwhelming. Haggard has handled it well since its infancy. He has touched countless lives in a positive manner, but with such pressure, any man could lose his own identity and falter. Whatever the relationship between Haggard and Mike Jones is, I would rather focus on the good in the man.

Jones, on the other hand, chose to publicly promote himself while humiliating another. Prostitution is illegal in Colorado, but this has not been addressed. His timing I believe was intended to garner as much publicity as possible. If he had a conscience, he would have spoken to Haggard one on one. I feel sorry for this man, who must have such low self-esteem that he must bring harm to so many.

I don't see this as a gay issue, only one man's attempt at self-indulgence. Yes, this will have profound effects on all of us, at least as far as we let it. The media will run this story for weeks, if not months. Jones will get his 15 minutes of fame and I'm sure will become a fixture on the talk-show circuit. He will leave a high body count in his wake.

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The recent unfortunate news about the Rev. Ted Haggard will be misinterpreted by many. They will say that he was a bad man or that he was weak. Haggard himself may fall prey to such conclusions. But we should see Haggard as an instrument of God's will.

Nothing he has done can take away the help and good things he has done for countless people. By exposing the reverend's behavior at this crucial time, it is clear God is using his instrument for his greatest sermon. A homosexual can still help people. A meth user can help people. While many will be inclined to renounce Haggard, the good he did for so many can never be taken away.

God wants us to know it is wrong to persecute people for their sexual orientation. It is wrong to persecute them for the chemicals they ingest. Their goodness derives from the good they do to others, and Haggard's actions caused no harm to anyone.

Haggard is the Lord's vehicle for a mighty sermon of tolerance. Let us hope this sermon is heard.

L.L. Williams
Colorado Springs

'Pastor' was used to push political agenda

"Pastor" Ted Haggard stopped being a pastor years ago when he became a member of the Republican power broker club. He wasn't on a weekly call with Karl Rove to give him spiritual guidance. Rove wanted to keep his finger on the pulse of the issues of most importance to evangelical Christians, so he knew which buttons to push next to keep the base fired up.

Haggard is a fallen politician who used a pulpit to propagandize the faithful and deliver the vote — maybe not overtly, but the message was clear. Evangelicals across the country are waking up to the fact that the Bush administration has pandered to them to increase the administration's power base, nothing more.

I hope Ted Haggard comes to terms with his sexuality and that his family and church can pick up the pieces and move forward.

Rob Heath
Monument

Family photo had no place in paper

I was very disappointed that The Gazette chose to include two of Ted Haggard's children in a large photo published on the front page on Friday.

Haggard is a public figure under investigation, but his children are neither. Just as we as a society choose to protect the identities of juvenile victims of crime, we should also choose to protect the identities of the innocent children of less-than-innocent parents. I'm sure The Gazette's decision to publish this photo served to deepen these children's pain at a time when they were already suffering.

I expect this type of crass journalism in the grocery store tabloids, not in The Gazette.

Robin Murray Krug
Colorado Springs

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

BY MAIL
Send comments to Letters to the Editor c/o The Gazette, P.O. Box 1779, Colorado Springs, CO 80901.

BY FAX
Call 636-0202

BY E-MAIL
opinion@gazette.com

Letters to the editor must include the author's full name, address and daytime phone number for verification. No letters from anonymous authors or those using pen names will be considered. Priority will be given to brief letters. Because of the volume of letters we receive, we cannot respond to each submission that is not published. Authors are limited to one published letter every six weeks. The Gazette reserves the right to edit submissions for length, taste and clarity. No e-mail attachments, please. All readers' submissions become exclusive property of The Gazette.

"GT" 11/8/06

Flap about gays in Houston jolts many

LOS ANGELES TIMES

HOUSTON • The co-owner of a landscaping company here called Garden Guy turned down a job in October by sending an e-mail to a man who had requested an estimate for work on his yard:

"I am appreciative of your time on the phone today and glad you contacted us," Sabrina Farber wrote. "I need to tell you that we cannot meet with you because we choose not to work with homosexuals. Best of luck in finding someone else to fill your landscaping needs. All the best."

Floored, the recipient of the e-mail, Michael Lord, and his partner forwarded the message to dozens of friends. Within days the e-mail had spread across the Internet to bloggers, the homosexual media and online gardening forums.

Farber and her husband, Todd, who've owned the landscaping company since 1991, were bombarded with profane phone calls and e-mails. Their online forum flooded with outraged posts.

"It blackens my mind to think that an alternative version of the KKK is alive & kicking in the USA," read one of the milder comments.

The Farbers released a statement saying they "do not hate homosexuals" and "did not refuse service with malicious intent. ... We meant to uphold our right as small-business owners to choose who our clients are. We are humbly sorry for the hurt that it has caused."

The episode was a jolt to many in Houston, where gays and lesbians have enjoyed increasing acceptance over the years. Despite the city's conservative reputation, there's been a significant shift in support of gay rights here, said Jack Valinski, executive director of Pride Houston, a gay-rights group.

"The e-mail was an aberration," Valinski said. "People may want to discriminate, but they're not blatant and public about it like they were before."

Gay and lesbian activist Carol Wyatt said she's "not surprised by homophobia, but that this woman thought it was socially acceptable to write about it in an e-mail. We've come a long way in Houston in terms of tolerance and acceptance. For this to bubble up is embarrassing for a lot of people who care about this city."

There have been no threats of legal action. But Valinski said activists may push for an anti-discrimination ordinance that prevents businesses from rejecting customers based on sexual orientation.

The Farbers are clear about their convictions in a "Learn About Garden Guy" page of their Web site (www.gardenguy.com). "The God-ordained institution of marriage is under attack in courts across the nation, and your help is needed," reads a tagline above a link to nogaymarriage.com.

FALL FROM GRACE

Dobson sets poor example by abandoning friend

How sad that James Dobson doesn't have the time to devote to the "rehabilitation" of his friend and former evangelical movement president, Ted Haggard ("Dobson quits Haggard team," Metro, Nov. 8). These two worked very closely together for years to deny homosexuals basic human rights.

I would like to think that Dobson would take the time with such a close friend and associate to prove that gays can be rehabilitated into heterosexuals and thus get into heaven.

Now that Haggard has been forced to confront the sexuality he was born with and can no longer hide from his family, I'm not at all surprised that Dobson wants nothing to do with him. How un-Christian. It doesn't take a genius to realize that Dobson's unwillingness to devote the time to his friend who desperately needs support right now has nothing to do with "time constraints" and everything to do with punishment and getting as far away from Ted Haggard as possible.

I would suggest that it is the religious right, with its collective judgemental, unaccepting and unforgiving mentality, that is responsible for the moral decay of society. They are the worst role models I can think of to teach compassion, love, acceptance and God.

Karan Godwin-Corey
Falcon

Haggard case shows God blesses homosexuals

After hearing the radio interview with Mike Jones, it seems apparent that Ted Haggard might be a homosexual. This means that for more than 20 years, New Life Church has been led by a closet homosexual.

The logical implication is that gay individuals can believe in God and have a vibrant relationship with him. God has abundantly blessed New Life Church with growth, influence and answered prayers — even with our leader being a homosexual. This revelation, I believe, is a call to the church to re-examine its beliefs and most strongly held tenets. Perhaps we've not seen God for who he really is. Perhaps that could be the greatest lesson we could learn from the whole situation — and become better Christians for it.

Sheilah Shapiro
Colorado Springs

ONE MORE TIME

Rev. Reynolds' work touched many lives

I want to thank Paul Asay for the powerful article regarding Rev. Benjamin Reynolds ("One last sermon," Life, Nov. 4). I attended Reynolds' last service on Oct. 29 and was moved to tears several times.

Asay's article was poignant in how it described Reynolds and the bravery he is displaying at a highly controversial time in his life. I cannot imagine the struggles he has endured over the years, being a same-gender-loving man, an African-American and a man of God.

Although I had the pleasure of being in his presence only once, his impact on my life is undeniable.

Dara L. Hoffman
Colorado Springs

BOTH WAYS BILL?

Ritter supports gay rights; or maybe he doesn't

If I had voted for Bill Ritter and for Referendum I (neither of which I did), I would be disturbed by the governor-elect's comments in Thursday's Gazette ("Ritter won't back bill to recognize gay couples"). After saying he would approve such a bill even if voter's rejected it (which they did), he now says the voters have spoken.

Although I agree with his position du jour on this issue, it seems that Ritter is on the path to his first gubernatorial nickname: Both Ways Bill.

Carrie Earll
Colorado Springs

REFERENDUM I

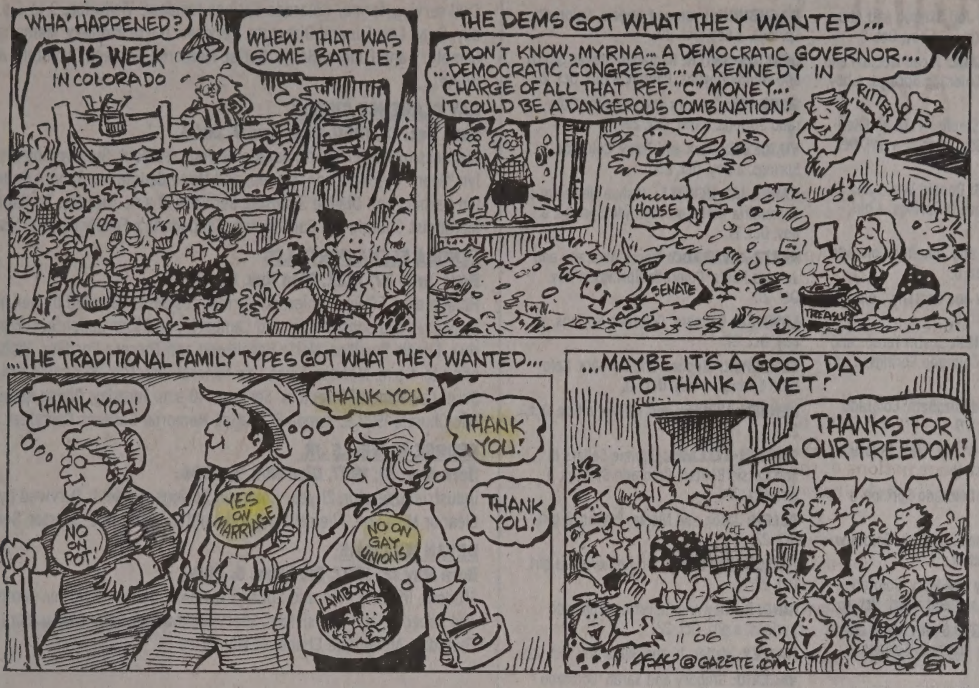
If backers care about marriage, they should fight divorce

Just over half the Coloradans who voted said that marriage should be defined as being between one man and one woman. Amendment 43 was orchestrated to write discrimination into our State Constitution under the guise of "protecting the sanctity of marriage."

I believe the authors of Amendment 43 missed the boat. If they truly wanted to protect the sanctity of marriage, the

"GT" 11/11/06

ASAY'S VIEW


WHA' HAPPENED?
THIS WEEK IN COLORADO
WHEW! THAT WAS SOME BATTLE!
THE DEMS GOT WHAT THEY WANTED...
I DON'T KNOW, MYRNA... A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR... ...DEMOCRATIC CONGRESS... A KENNEDY IN CHARGE OF ALL THAT REF. "C" MONEY... IT COULD BE A DANGEROUS COMBINATION!
RITTER
HOUSE
SENATE
TREASURY
...THE TRADITIONAL FAMILY TYPES GOT WHAT THEY WANTED...
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
NO ON POT!
YES ON MARRIAGE
NO ON GAY UNIONS
LAWYERS!
...MAYBE IT'S A GOOD DAY TO THANK A VET!
THANKS FOR OUR FREEDOM!
11 '06
ASAY@GAZETTE.COM

CHUCK ASAY, THE GAZETTE

amendment should have said that marriage is defined as being between "one man, one woman, and one time." The real threat to marriage today is not the gay and lesbian community, but divorce. Current statistics indicate that 50 percent of all marriages end in divorce. More troubling, that figure in El Paso County is 70 percent.

If you really want to protect the sanctity of marriage, then make divorce more difficult and reward those who remain in their first marriage.

How ironic that the evening of Election Day, the poster child for frivolous marriages announced her intention to divorce her husband. I am speaking about Britney Spears. You probably remember her from her first marriage that lasted 55 hours.

More than 40 years ago, 70 percent of the population was against inter-racial marriage. It took so-called activist judges to rule that those laws were a violation of civil rights. Referendum I failed this time, but that was just a small battle in the war for civil rights. Will it again take judges to pull those citizens with their heads in the sand into the 21st century and make marriage fair for all people?

Brian Lund
Colorado Springs

"GT" 11/13/06

Bishops may let gays retain sexual orientation

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

CHICAGO • While continuing to stress that same-sex relationships are immoral, America's Roman Catholic bishops may approve new guidelines this week that absolve gay Catholics of any obligation to try to alter their sexual orientation.

The guidelines for ministering to homosexuals, to be reviewed when bishops convene today in Baltimore for their annual fall meeting, also will urge clergy to baptize the adopted children of gay couples who agree to raise them Catholic.

"We are trying to find a language that does not betray the teaching of the church, but will perhaps express it in ways that are not so offensive," Cardinal Francis George, vice president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in an interview last week.

"The conclusions are the same," George said. "The language will be less painful than sometimes the language has been in the past."

The bishops also plan to remind parishioners how to prepare themselves for communion, laying a foundation that would make it easier for clergy to deny the sacrament to Catholics at odds with the church, including politicians.

The issue surfaced during the 2004 presidential campaign when some bishops threatened to deny communion to Sen. John Kerry, a Catholic who supports abortion rights.

"That started a conversation that wasn't resolved, but brought up this other thing — worthiness to receive communion on everybody's part," George said. "It shouldn't be automatic. There's personal scrutiny and examination of conscience that should take place."

Missing from the meeting's agenda is any mention of the war in Iraq, an absence that irks parishioners who believe the bishops should focus on that issue rather than homosexuality.

"We hate to see our moral teachers squandering their moral teaching authority when there are important issues they should be dealing with — poverty and social justice and the war," said Sam Sinnett, president of Dignity USA, the nation's largest gay Catholic organization.

"They're much more concerned with whether two homosexuals are going to get married or not," he said. "They've lost focus on the needs of the human race."

The documents on ministering to gay people, drafted by conference committees, could encounter opposition from conservative bishops. Vatican directives bar most gay men from pursuing ordination and prohibit priests with "homosexual tendencies" from teaching or running seminaries.

Since issuing those injunctions, Pope Benedict XVI has implied a connection between homosexuality and the clergy sex abuse scandal, declaring a need to "purify" the church.

This won't be the first time bishops have addressed the issue of gay Catholics. A pastoral letter drafted in 1997 counseled parents to love their gay sons and daughters and encourage them to live a chaste life.

While the letter did not stray from church teaching, its advice stirred too much controversy and did not pass.

"GT" 11/14/06

FALL FROM GRACE

Gay activists discount bisexual tendencies

It is evident from the letters to the editor and numerous newspaper articles that the gay rights movement and homosexual activism are merely a political ploy and leftist power plays within our cultural divide. Because of Pastor Ted Haggard's long-term dalliance with a male homosexual, the gay community is pushing its agenda with new vigor, resolve and wants this dismissed minister to "accept his dark side" and "embrace" his supposed gay inclinations. This is a betrayal of their own confused teachings and sexual doctrine.

Almost every national homosexual organization rallies around gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals. So why are the media and the opponents of evangelical Christianity and traditional conservatism so quick to label Haggard a closet homosexual, now exposed? What happened to bisexualism? It sounds like discrimination toward another form of sexual orientation to me.

One homosexual leader has said, "You are either gay, straight, or lying!" This reflects hypocrisy and reveals an obvious prejudice within the gay culture. Haggard has been married for 28 years and sired five children, but his struggle and confusion can't be with bisexuality according to the homosexual community.

As an evangelical, do I believe in bisexualism? Yes, but to me, it's still a perversion of the natural order and a deviation from the God-given norm. From the responses of the gay activists, bisexual acting out is merely a temporary holding pattern moving toward or not recognizing full-blown homosexuality.

Tom Pedigo
Colorado Springs

Disapproval of lifestyle doesn't equate to 'hate'

Some who have written letters in response to the news of Pastor Ted Haggard's fall seem to think you can't be loving if you tell someone that some actions are right and some are wrong. It's not hateful to say that something is right and another thing is wrong. If your friend is doing something that is wrong, the most loving thing you can do is to convince him or her to stop.

Granted, there are people who are judgmental and hateful. We see them on the news with picket signs and encounter them in daily life. They blast people who are tempted in particular ways, but have less to say about other temptations. People who follow Jesus, however, admit that they have within themselves a darkness that he remedies with his grace, forgiveness, and transforming power. This admission leads them to be humble, gracious and loving people who point others to the same remedy.

Others who have written have said that if someone is attracted to the same sex, he or she should just accept that they are gay and act on those feelings. If we apply that reasoning to other areas of sexuality, then it should be OK for a man who is attracted to multiple women to sleep with as many as he would like. He should also be able to marry many women and have the government provide benefits for all his wives. We need a different way to set standards for sexual behavior than our feelings and attractions, because our attractions don't always lead us to healthy relationships.

Michael Hanratty
Colorado Springs

"GT" 11/15/06

U.S. bishops vote to welcome gays

But say they shouldn't receive Communion

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Trying to narrow the gap between ministry and strict core beliefs, the nation's Roman Catholic bishops Tuesday affirmed the need to make parishes more welcoming to gay men and lesbians but said people who engage in homosexual activity should refrain from receiving Communion.

The guidelines overwhelmingly approved by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops meeting in Baltimore sought to create a framework for being more supportive of gay parishioners.

Critics, however, said the guidelines convey a mixed message.

"I think it's a shame," said Mariette Sawchuk of Los Angeles, a Catholic and active member of a group called Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays.

"The message that Jesus gives us is an inclusive one. He always went out of his way to support the marginalized, and I think He would want us Catholics to do the same."

Conservative Judaism and major Christian denominations — including the Episcopal Church and Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. — are confronting similar questions about the role of gays and religion.

BAPTISTS' POLICY

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina voted Tuesday to cut ties with congregations that affirm or approve of homosexuality, formally adopting a rigid anti-gay policy that allows the group to investigate whether member churches are gay friendly.

The policy adopted by the North Carolina convention, which includes more than 4,000 member churches and 1.2 million members, is even stricter than that of the national Southern Baptist Convention, according to a more liberal Baptist organization.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Written by Bishop Arthur Serratelli of Patterson, N.J., chairman of the bishops doctrine committee, the document teaches that people with "a homosexual inclination" must be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity, and it condemns violence, scorn and hatred.

It also underlines the faith's teaching that although homosexual leanings are not necessarily "rejected by God or the Church," engaging in homosexual activity is inherently sinful and contrary to the divine plan.

The bishops also oppose same-sex unions and adoption by gay and lesbian couples.

They do recommend that priests baptize their children, provided they are raised in the Catholic religion.

"GT" 11/15/06

South Africa approves bill recognizing gay marriages

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE TOWN, South Africa • South African lawmakers passed legislation recognizing gay marriages Tuesday despite criticism from traditionalists and gay activists.

The bill, unprecedented on a continent where homosexuality is taboo, was decried by gay activists for not going far enough and by opponents who warned it "was provoking God's anger."

Veterans of the governing African National Congress praised the Civil Union Bill for extending basic freedoms to everyone under the spirit of the country's first post-apartheid constitution, adopted a decade ago by framers determined to make discrimination a thing of the past.

"When we attained our democracy, we sought to distinguish ourselves from an unjust painful past by declaring that never again shall it be that any South African will be discriminated against on the basis of color, creed, culture and sex," Home Affairs Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula said.

A Christian lawmaker, Kenneth Meshoe, said Tuesday was the "saddest day in our 12 years of democracy" and warned that South Africa "was provoking God's anger."

His comments reflected the majority view on a deeply conservative continent.

Homosexuality is illegal in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana and most other sub-Saharan countries. Even in South Africa, gays and lesbians are often attacked because of their sexual orientation.

The Roman Catholic Church and many traditionalist leaders in South Africa said the measure denigrated the sanctity of marriages between men and women.

To ease some of these concerns, the bill allowed religious and civil officers to refuse to marry same-sex couples on moral grounds.

S. Africa gives gays right to inheritance

"GT" 11/29/06

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE TOWN, South Africa • South Africa's highest court ruled Thursday that gay partners must have the same inheritance rights as married couples, a decision in line with its landmark 2005 judgment that same sex marriages should be legalized.

The 10-member Constitutional Court ruled unanimously that existing succession laws were illegal because they excluded gay partners from provisions giving spouses automatic inheritance rights if a partner dies without leaving a will. The order was to have immediate effect.

It said the law should be changed to insert after every mention of the word "spouse," the phrase "or partner in a permanent same-sex life partnership in which the partners have undertaken reciprocal duties of support."

The current regulation "amounts to discrimination on the listed ground of sexual orientation," it said.

The ruling was a further victory for activists who are anticipating being able to marry their partners from Dec. 1, making South Africa the first nation on a deeply conservative continent to legalize same sex marriages.

Still, homosexuality remains largely taboo in South Africa, with many people saying it violates African cultural norms.

South Africa's higher legislative chamber is expected to vote Monday on the Civil Union Bill, which was approved last week by the main parliamentary chamber.

"GT" 12/1/06

Gay marriage legal in S. Africa

CAPE TOWN, South Africa • South Africa on Thursday became the first country in Africa, and only the fifth in the world, to legalize same-sex marriages.

The Civil Union Act goes into effect a day ahead of a Dec. 1 deadline set by the country's Constitutional Court, which required the marriage law be changed to ensure equality.

Gay-rights groups have welcomed the law, although they criticized provisions allowing clergy and civil-marriage officers to turn away gay couples if their consciences prevents them from marrying them.

NEWS SERVICES

YourTurn

By Rev. Benjamin Broadbent

'An example must be set' — but which one?

Pastor Ted Haggard wrote in his letter to New Life Church last Sunday, "An example must be set." As a fellow pastor reading those words, I agree and respond with a great hope and a lesser fear.

The great hope is that Pastor Ted will set an example for embracing human sexuality as a gift, and homosexuality as a variation of that gift. In so doing, a man of his charisma could change religious and political views toward homosexual people and inaugurate an era of greater understanding and acceptance of gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

My lesser fear is that, yet again, the example set will be to reduce sexuality to mere behavior, pushing such behavior shamefully into the shadows. In his letter, Pastor Ted describes his sexuality in exactly this way: "There is a part of my life that is so repulsive and dark that I've been warring against it all of my adult life."

'For what should Pastor Ted be forgiven?' For being gay?

This past week's shocking revelation was that Pastor Ted is a gay (or bisexual) person who has been demonizing himself and others for many years. Pastor Ted himself has preached that such an orientation is a sin. To call something "sinful" that is a fundamental part of who we are is to force into the shadows an element of ourselves that could potentially be a source of great joy to ourselves and others.

It may come as a surprise to many (and this is without dispute) that "homosexuality" is a term totally foreign to the Bible. Homosexuality is a modern term that describes a same-gender sexual orientation. Modern people, including the vast majority of professional psychologists, acknowledge that sexuality expresses itself in multiple orientations. Men love other men and women love other women in mutual, sexually healthy relationships.

While the concept of "homosexuality" is not known to any of the myriad biblical writers (don't let certain translations of the Hebrew and Greek original fool you), biblical writers do know something about sexual immorality, and such acts are always the result of power imbalances, violence and deception.

Pastor Ted writes, "I am a sinner. I have fallen. I desperately need to be forgiven and healed." Our hearts should groan with compassion when we read these words. And our minds should ask: "For what should Pastor Ted be forgiven?" For being gay? Not necessary. Such is not a sin in biblical faith. Being gay is an orientation that can be a healthy part of a person's identity when given room to express itself without shame.

Instead, let us forgive Pastor Ted for withholding this important part of himself for all these years. Let us forgive Pastor Ted for using the pulpit to ostracize others who have had the same struggle. Let us forgive Pastor Ted for deceiving himself, his church and his community for so long.

And let us encourage him to set an example, especially those of us who have been critical of him when we thought he was a morally upright and righteous straight man. We now know he is none of these things. His own failings remind us of our own. Let us ask ourselves, "What are the ways in which I fail to practice what I preach? What part of myself do I keep in the shadows and fail to bring into the light? How can I contribute to a society that encourages healthy expressions of sexuality?"

Love conquers fear every time. This is the great Christian hope. Let us love Pastor Ted for who he is and let us have compassion for the ways in which he has failed. Let us also have compassion for gay and lesbian people, many of whom belong to Pastor Ted's former congregation, who have been hiding for too long. Pastor Ted, starting now, set the example you spoke of, embracing the darkest part of yourself and holding it up to the light.

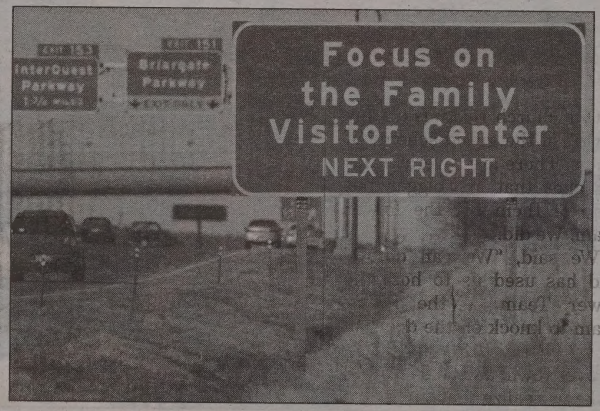
Benjamin Broadbent serves as senior pastor at First Congregational United Church of Christ of Colorado Springs.

OPINION | **RELIGION**

Writer says many offended by Focus on the Family's actions

Editor's note: Focus on the Family was asked to respond to this article. It declined. YourHub will print your stories, blogs, events and photos. Find us at ColoradoSprings.com. Click on your area in the YourHub window.

By **WILLIAM WALDRON**
YOURHUB CONTRIBUTOR



KIRK SPEER, YOURHUB STAFF

Focus on the Family is large enough to justify its own highway sign, but not everyone is happy with its presence in Briargate.

As the owner of a service-oriented business, I am absolutely amazed by the number of regular people who are fed up with the state of affairs in Colorado Springs.

Focus on the Family supporters are the minority; New Life Church parishioners are the minority. I am very happy that The Gazette, which has a reputation as a conservative paper, started this forum.Our other outlet, The Independent, featured an article this week that made me think of how this organization is misleading the people of Colorado Springs.

Focus on the Family apparently has its own armory! Let us pause and think of some other religious organizations with their own armory — the Branch Davidians being the first to mind.

When my children ask about Focus on the Family, I tell them that it is a cult — a cult that tolerates hate, teaches discrimination and now is openly armed.

The Air Force Academy is letting Focus on the Family use its rifle range. This is not a close-combat "bodyguard" type of range; this is a rifle range for, from what can be inferred from The Independent's article, long rifles such as AR-15s, M4s or AK-47s. I have to ask myself why a religious organization would need to arm its security forces with battle rifles with an effective range of 300-plus meters.

Colorado Springs Independent readers recently voted for the Best of the Springs, and, in the "Best if They Would Leave Town" category, the first-place winner was Focus on the Family, with third place going to James Dobson himself.

Focus has an excellent marketing program; kudos to the personnel in that department. Who wouldn't want to have a "perfect" family? I wouldn't! Neither would a lot of other families I know. Trials and tribulations are what make people great, and are a big part of what brings families closer.

I have read the Bible and I wonder if there are different Bibles at fundamentalist, right-wing Christian groups from the copy I have.

Jesus taught love; Jesus taught non-violence.Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come for the righteous but the sinners."We need to speak up; we need to stop accepting the things these so-called Christians feed us from their armed compound on the north side.

should stop.

David B. Rivkin Jr. and Lee A. Casey are lawyers who served in the Justice Department under Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.

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Other voices

Haggard must earn forgiveness he seeks

OPINION

BARRY FAGIN
Contributing columnist

I can't forgive Ted Haggard. Not because I'm unable to, but because it's forbidden. I'm not one of his victims.

Jewish tradition teaches that forgiveness for a sin comes from those most hurt by it. That's why murder is so horrible. True forgiveness is impossible, at least in this lifetime. The victims are gone.

Fortunately, Haggard's victims remain. They spread out from his tormented soul like shock waves of an explosion. The closer you get, the more damage you find.

At the outer edge, we have millions of gay men and women told acting in accordance with who they are, as Haggard has done, is sinful and wrong. They are denied legal recognition of committed relationships and are targets of fanatical hatred and prejudice.

Haggard deserves credit for never preaching hate. But his public words and influence over the National Association of Evangelicals helped marginalize homosexuals in America. I've never been the target of hatred because of my Judaism. But I do know something of marginalization and the power of reaching out. To earn the forgiveness of his fellow homosexuals, Haggard should come out as a gay man and minister to their spiritual needs.

Moving inward from the outermost circle of victims, the waves get a little rougher. Haggard's congregants sought his help in knowing God's will. They trusted him with their deepest secrets.

I know something of their pain, too. Not long ago, the rabbi of the synagogue where I grew up admitted to a horrible crime and is now in prison. The wound in the heart of New Life's worshippers must be very deep indeed. But their response has been committed, clear and Christian: We love and forgive our pastor, for we are all human. I agree with the last, but it misses the point. We may all be hypocrites and liars, but very few of us are charismatic leaders in positions of power.

People in positions of leadership have a special obligation to match words with deeds. That is what integrity is: Making speech and action one. The more influence you have, the more important it is to banish hypocrisy from your life.

I invite New Life worshippers to imagine what things would be like this Sunday if Mike Jones hadn't come forward. You'd be basking in the glow of worship, convinced of your pastor's goodness and honesty. Suggestions that he was an adulterous drug user would have been denounced as rumors spread by Satan.

In fact, Haggard's letter calls Jones his "accuser," the literal translation of "Satan" from the Hebrew. Does he want us to believe Jones is the devil?

Haggard's letter was not a confession. It was an admission to the bare minimum of what he believed Jones could corroborate. Members of New Life, if he had wanted to tell you anything, he could have bared his soul any Sunday for the past 10 years.

To earn your forgiveness, give him the pulpit one more time. For his last sermon at New Life, he should tell you every secret he has. Including the ones he doesn't have to.

Finally, at the storm-tossed core of Haggard's whirlpool, we find his wife and children. Flailing and gasping for air, they must now swim for their lives. No one seems to be talking about Haggard putting his wife at risk. Even worse, he may have jeopardized his children, depending on how far back his sexual history goes.

I don't know Gayle Haggard or her kids, but my heart goes out to them. I hope they get the support they need. I know women who gave their love to gay men. Hearing their pain is unbearable, it will tear out your heart. To every member of my gender, listen and heed: There is nothing wrong with homosexuality. There is everything wrong with deceit. If you are sexually attracted to men, do not accept a woman's love.

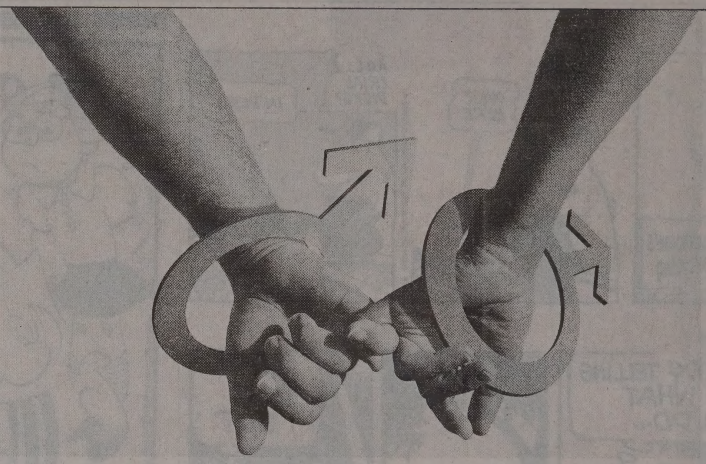
Gayle's courageous letter speaks of that love. She speaks of faithfulness as well. But she does not mention forgiveness. Good for you, Gayle. Deuteronomy 16:20 says "Justice, justice shalt thou pursue." Forgiveness is important, but it must be earned. Make your husband earn it for a long, long time.

Fagin, of Colorado Springs, is a senior fellow at the Independence Institute. His column appears on alternate Thursdays. Readers may e-mail him at barry@faginfamily.net.

Debate over gays is wide-ranging

Local, national groups take up divisive topic

By PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE



The debate over faith and human sexuality is raging across the city and the nation. These wide-ranging discussions boil down to one question: Is homosexuality sanctioned by God?

Christians answer that question in opposite ways, but both sides are convinced they're doing God's will.

On one side sit more traditional believers, who say the Bible is God's blueprint for life.

It clearly condemns homosexuality, they say: Christianity is not a mix-and-match faith, in which believers can pick and choose the verses that suit them best.

On the other side are those who say the Bible was never intended to be a 3,000-year-old code book. It's a book that breathes, and one whose interpretations should change — and have changed — with time. Some argue that words have been translated and/or interpreted incorrectly or out of context.

They also wonder why Jesus would have spent so much time talking about poverty, but did not say one word about homosexuality. If it wasn't that big a deal for Jesus, they ask, why should it be for us?

In the middle are millions of Christians who don't quite know what to think: The Bible seems to say that homosexuality is a sin, yet they might know gay Christians who seem sincere and faithful. How can those things be reconciled?

Here's a look at a few instances in which the issue has had an impact:

- The Rev. Benjamin Reynolds left Emmanuel Missio Church, a black c rado Springs, a m his congregation
- The United S Church is being r sexuality after the Church ordained tively gay man as Episcopal parish part over sexualit
- Major denom the Presbyterian United Methodist Evangelical Luthe America, have arg role practicing gay should play in the
- Even the Ron Church, which has sexuality is wrong years, is talking ab U.S. Conference o wants the church ing of gays and les ally active gays sh munion.

www.justspirit.org.

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BIBLE PASSAGES

Genesis 19:1-13: Lot in Sodom

"And they called to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so we may know them.' Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said 'I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.'" (Genesis 19:5-7)

"Those who use this to condemn homosexuality overlook the fact that God already decided to destroy these two cities (Genesis 18:16-21). Also, the word for 'know' is 'yada,' which has many meanings, one of them sexual. Based on this, the argument has been made that the men of the city wanted to rape the angels. . . . The citizens of Sodom probably thought the angels were spies and wanted to interrogate them (another definition of 'yada') or . . . rape them to prove their military strength. Neither of these speaks to homosexual acts in any kind of loving and mutual context."

Leviticus 18:22

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

"Culturally, the Israelites were moving into a neighborhood of diverse religious practices. In order to remain pure and show the holiness of God, the Israelites were not to act as their neighbors. Having sex with a man was a ritual performed to appease the god Ba'al in order to have more rain or less, depending upon the season, to have a bountiful harvest. Other religious practices that were considered an abomination include . . . beard trimming (19:27) (and) tattooing (19:28)."

Romans 1:26-27

"For this reason God gave them up to

"Verse 26 begins, 'For this reason.' For what reason? We

AFTER THE INVITE

Be a savvy wedding guest

You've been invited to a wedding. How to be a good guest? Here are some tips from weddingchannel.com:

- If the invitation has only your name on it, you don't get to take a guest.
- Always RSVP. The bride and groom aren't mind readers. Neither are their caterers.
- Arrive on time. If you're late, walk in as discreetly as possible.
- Ignore any rules that say black isn't appropriate for a wedding; it is. But white is inappropriate.
- According to custom, you have up to a year to present the happy couple with a wedding gift. But most happy couples appreciate getting a gift ASAP. And if you're invited to the wedding and reception, you need to give a gift, even if you don't accept the invitation.
- If you don't get a thank-you note from the bride and groom, contact them to make sure they received your gift. They're supposed to get those thank-yous mailed right away. Any more than an eight-week delay is very bad.

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

CARD COMPANY'S NEW IDEA

Magazine uses Hallmark voice

It's intended to be something of a greeting card to a certain kind of woman: "Celebrating Your Life" says the over line on the premiere issue of Hallmark Magazine.

It carries sections with names such as Inspire, Renew and Connect. It is aimed at women with college educations, growing children and incomes north of $80,000.

But in a field crowded with competitors, can a greeting-card company offer a magazine special enough to build relationships with readers that will endure beyond the love-letter phase?

Its editors, of course, say yes, hoping to capitalize on what Hallmark has done for decades: helping people appreciate one another and life's good moments.

"Hallmark's strong suit – why people come to Hallmark – is because they're interested in connecting with the people they love, and they're interested in storytelling," said editor Lisa Benenson during a brief visit to Hallmark's Kansas City headquarters from the magazine's New York offices.

The debut issue hit newsstands late September.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AUTHORS OBSERVE DEEP BONDS, DEEP ENVY

Sisterhood filled with complexity

By NANCI HELLMICH
USA TODAY

Many sisters share secrets they'd never tell anyone else. Some are deeply bonded in ways that are hard to explain. And some are deeply estranged in ways also hard to untangle.

But two authors give it a shot.

Vikki Stark, a family therapist in Montreal, has spent three years interviewing or surveying 400 women, teens and girls with sisters. Stark says she has often been struck by the "intensity of the sister bond" during 20 years as a therapist and the years of research for her new book, "My Sister, My Self: Understanding the Sibling Relationship That Shapes Our Lives, Our Loves and Ourselves" (McGraw-Hill, $15.95).

"The relationship is very important to women. It cuts very deeply to a women's identity."

Terri Apter, a psychologist at the University of Cambridge in Britain, agrees that many sisters have complex connections. She interviewed 74 women for her book "The Sister Knot: Why We Fight, Why We're Jealous, and Why We'll Love Each Other No Matter What," out in January (W.W. Norton, $25.95). "Women want love and approval from their sisters. And they want to carve out a separate identity," Apter says.

For some women, their relationship with their sisters is one of the longest, deepest ones in their lives, Stark says. They have warm memories of growing up together, playing dress-up and having pillow fights. As adults, they are best friends and confidantes.

But many women don't have this picture-perfect connection. Instead the relationship may be fraught with envy and ambivalence. They love their sister, but there are things that drive them crazy about her, Stark says. From her research, she's found:

- Many women permit their sister an honesty they won't allow anyone else. They believe she will tell them the truth when they ask questions.
- Most older siblings want their little sisters' life to turn out well. "They have an investment in their little sister. They feel as if they contributed to her growing up and being a good person."
- Some women greatly admire the very qualities in their sisters that make it hard to connect with them, such as independence, assertiveness and not caring what others think.
- Women compare looks. One woman told Stark that "it's hard being the ugliest girl in a family full of sisters."
- Some women say their sisters affect their feelings about their bodies. "The most common thing I heard women say with regard to body image was that they couldn't stop comparing themselves to their sister."
- Weight is a major issue, she says. "The whole idea of who is heavier or thinner is always there. It's huge."

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

EX-ETIQUETTE

Baby shower invites grace

By JANN BLACKSTONE-FORD and SHARYL JUPE
CONTRA COSTA TIMES

QUESTION: I am hosting a baby shower for my daughter. Do I invite her dad's wife and extended family? I have no problem inviting my ex-mother-in-law, but what about my ex-sister-in-law, who is not kind to me in any way? Right now I have two lists going. I asked my daughter what she wanted, and she said it didn't matter. I suspect they will wait for my invitation to come so they (the exes and steps) can respond with, "Thanks, but no thanks, we're having our own."

ANSWER: You can buy into the "your side/my side" mentality, or you can break the chain of bad behavior and set the example. The choice is yours. But, if we had a vote, we'd say the bad behavior stops here.

There's a baby coming into the family. It's time to celebrate, not retire to your side of life. When this baby comes, you will share a bloodline, and even though these people have been hurtful, you will be linked to them. Consider how you want to contribute to this child's upbringing. Do you want to perpetuate the hurt and anger of the past by not inviting family, or do you want to start fresh with this fresh new life?

Blackstone-Ford and her husband's ex-wife, Jupe, are the authors of "Ex-Etiquette for Parents" and the founders of Bonus Families (www.bonusfamilies.com).

HAZING HAZARDS

Danger starts before college

Universities are classic settings for hazing, but experts say it happens in all kinds of sports teams and clubs from middle school up. If it's humiliating or dangerous, and it's required to get into a group, it's hazing. Here are some numbers to ponder:

- At high schools, half of all students involved in a group are hazed, according to a 2000 Alfred University study on hazing in high school.
- Every year from 1970 to 2005, at least one student has died from hazing on a college campus in the U.S.
- About 1.5 million U.S. high-school students are hazed every year.
- Eighty percent of college athletes and 24 percent of high-school athletes report being hazed.
- Thirteen percent of high-school students chose not to join a group for fear of being hazed, and 10 percent left a group because of hazing.

Sources: Alfred University, StopHazing.org.

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

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WEEKDAY PROGRAMS

5:00 AM	Powerpoint ... Dr. Jack Graham	1:00 PM	Truths That Transform ... Dr. D. James Kennedy
5:30 AM	The Simple Life ... Ron Vietti	1:30 PM	Money Matters ... Howard Dayton
5:45 AM	Dwelling Place Daily ... Pastor Al Pittman	2:00 PM	Word & Spirit ... Pastor Steve Holt
6:00 AM	Thru The Bible ... Dr. J. Vernon McGee	2:30 PM	Rocky Mountain Calvary Eric Cartier
6:30 AM	Truth For Life ... Alistair Begg	3:00 PM	Love Worth Finding ... Dr. Adrian Rogers
7:00 AM	Focus on the Family ... Dr. James Dobson	3:30 PM	Living on the Edge ... Chip Ingram
7:30 AM	Insight for Living ... Chuck Swindoll	3:57 PM	Dobson Family Minute ... Dr. James Dobson
8:00 AM	Family Life Today ... Dennis Rainey	4:00 PM	Life Today (Mo-Thu) ... Ted Griffin
8:30 AM	In Touch ... Dr. Charles Stanley	4:00 PM	Focus Friday (Fri) ... Focus on the Family
8:57 AM	Family News in Focus ... Bob Ditmer	6:00 PM	Bible Answer Man ... Hank Hanegraff
9:00 AM	Leading The Way ... Dr. Michael Youssef	6:57 PM	Plugged In (Fri) ... Bob Waliszewski
9:30 AM	Walk in the Word ... Dr. James McDonald	7:00 PM	A New Beginning ... Greg Laurie
10:00 AM	Jay Sekulow Live! ... Jay Sekulow	7:30 PM	Focus on the Family ... Dr. James Dobson
10:30 AM	Back to the Bible ... Woodrow Kroll	8:00 PM	Adventures in Odyssey
11:00 AM	New Life Live! ... Steve Arterburn	8:30 PM	Powerpoint ... Dr. Jack Graham
11:57 AM	Family News In Focus ... Bob Ditmer	9:00 PM	Haven Today ... Charles Morris
12:00 PM	Focus on the Family ... Dr. James Dobson	9:30 PM	Grace To You ... John MacArthur
12:30 PM	Renewing Your Mind ... RC Sproul	10:00 PM	Hope in the Night ... June Hunt

LOCAL WEEKEND PROGRAMS

SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
9:30 AM	Springs Life Fellowship ... Pastor L.B. Lee	7:30 AM	Nothing but the Truth ... Dr. Bob Stuart
11:00 AM	Blazing Grace ... Jayson Graves	8:00 AM	Calvary Worship Ctr ... Pastor Al Pittman
1:00 PM	Project Peace ... Dr. Michael Maddox	8:30 AM	Fellowship of the Rockies/Pueblo ... Pastor Charlie Jones
5:00 PM	Church of Christ ... Bro. Stacey Mobley	9:00 AM	Christ the King Church ... Dr. Bob Grant
6:00 PM	New Geneva ... Dr. Dominic Aquila	9:30 AM	Vista Grande Baptist ... Dr. Bobby Holt
		10:00 AM	First Presbyterian ... Dr. Jim Singleton
		11:00 AM	Rocky Mtn Calv. Chapel ... Pastor Eric Cartier
		3:30 PM	Israelite Church Of God in Christ ... Pastor Roosevelt Dunn

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Churches grapple with meaning of verses tied to homosexuality

BY PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE

SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGE

CHURCH

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THE REV. NORI ROST – JUST SPIRIT

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"GT" 11/22/06

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The 6-1 decision was hailed by rights advocates as a political advance for homosexuals, who have won previous court decisions granting them broader rights in areas such as survivor benefits and inheritance. It also was cheered by those who support legalizing civil marriages in Israel, where only religious ceremonies are allowed.

"I am glad we won and got what we wanted to achieve in this petition, which was the basic right to be registered as married by the Israeli Ministry of Interior, just as any couple marrying abroad does and takes it for granted," Joseph Bar Lev, a 39-year-old folk-dancing teacher who was one of the petitioners, told Israel Radio. "At the same time, this is still the beginning of the road because the real aspiration is that civil marriage will be possible in Israel, too."

The ruling did not legalize same-sex weddings in Israel.

"We hope that one day any couple who wants to marry in Israel, whether homosexual

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Conservatives urge Wal-Mart boycott

Retailer's gay-rights outreach seen as betrayal

By DAVID CRARY
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK • Long under fire from the left, Wal-Mart is now a target of Christian conservatives urging shoppers to boycott the huge retailer's post-Thanksgiving sales because of its low-key outreach to some gay-rights organizations.

One group, the American Family Association, is asking supporters to stay away from Wal-Mart on Friday and Saturday, two of the busiest shopping days of the year. Another group, Operation Save America, plans prayer-and-preaching rallies outside many Wal-Mart stores Friday.

The corporate actions that triggered the protests were little different from those taken by scores of major companies in recent years: Wal-Mart paid $25,000 this summer to become a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and donated $60,000 to Out and Equal, which promotes gay-rights advances in the workplace.

Conservative leaders viewed these actions as a betrayal of Wal-Mart's

SEE WAL-MART • PAGE 4

added partner benefits

FROM PAGE 1

traditions, which have included efforts to weed out magazines with racy covers and CDs with explicit lyrics.

"This has been Christian families' favorite store — and now they're giving in, sliding down the slippery slope so many other corporations have gone down," said the Rev. Flip Benham of Operation Save America. "They're all being extorted by the radical homosexual agenda."

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. spokesman David Tovar said the company's outreach to the gay-rights groups is part of a broader effort to best serve its diverse customer base.

"We take pride that we treat every customer, every supplier, every member of our communities fairly and equally," Tovar said Tuesday. "We do not have a position on same-sex marriage. ... What we do have is a strong commitment to diversity. We're against discrimination everywhere."

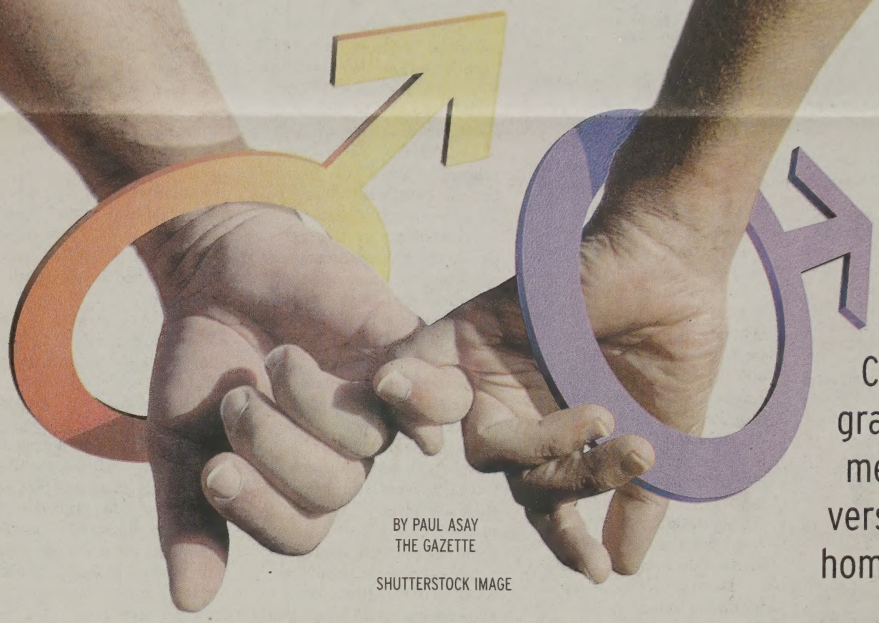
Justin Nelson, president of the Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, said conservative activists had misrepresented his business-oriented group as a leading advocate of gay marriage in order to tarnish Wal-Mart.

"Their campaign has not been to educate, but to mislead," he said.

Wal-Mart ranks in the middle among companies rated by the Human Rights Campaign, a major gay-rights group, for workplace policies toward gays. Scores of companies now have a perfect 100 rating, while Wal-Mart's rating has risen from 14 in 2002 to 65 this year as it added sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination code and offered some domestic-partner benefits.

Tim Wildmon, the American Family Association's president, said Wal-Mart had been responsive to conservative pressure on a different issue, approving use of the word "Christmas" in advertising and employee greetings this season after shifting to a "happy holidays" phrasing last year.

The Great Divide



Churches grapple with meaning of verses tied to homosexuality

BY PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE

SHUTTERSTOCK IMAGE

Gay sex.

Like it or not, it's a defining issue for the Christian church today. Such lofty concepts as predestination and grace vs. works aside, the hottest debates in the pews involve who can sleep with whom, and why.

Allegations that the Rev. Ted Haggard had a three-year sexual relationship with a male escort brought the evangelical world into the fray, though the teachings of most evangelical churches are quite clear: Homosexuality is a sin.

But the debate goes beyond one sensational story. Congregations, locally and nationally, are talking about this issue.

Below is a look at four biblical passages that mention homosexuality, and what two local faith leaders — one on each side of the issue — have to say about them.

RELATED STORY on Page 7

THE REV. STEVE HOLT – MOUNTAIN SPRINGS CHURCH

Holt, founding pastor of the 3,500-member Mountain Springs Church, teaches the Bible verse-by-verse to his congregants, starting with the book of Genesis and plowing straight through. He also encouraged his church to support Amendment 43, which defines marriage as between a man and woman, and oppose Referendum I, which would have given same-sex couples certain legal rights.

THE REV. NORI ROST – JUST SPIRIT

Rost, former pastor of the Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, a predominantly gay and lesbian congregation, founded and now leads Just Spirit, the social-justice arm of the national Metropolitan Community Church. Rost has written sermons about the biblical verses that mention sexuality, and she says that she will forward them to those who contact her through the Web site, www.justspirit.org.

BIBLE PASSAGES

Genesis 19:1-13: Lot in Sodom

"And they called to Lot, 'Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so we may know them.' Lot went out to the men at the entrance, shut the door after him, and said 'I beg you, my brothers, do not act so wickedly.'" (Genesis 19:5-7)

"These were the men of the city coming after the male visitors of Lot. It is from this story that we get the word, "sodomy," which means, in the Oxford English dictionary, homosexual sex. In the subsequent verses, we observe God's response to the sins of this city as he now destroys it with fire and brimstone. It is important to note that the homosexuality of this city is not the only sin that God is judging, but it does appear to have been one of the most pervasive."

"Those who use this to condemn homosexuality overlook the fact that God already decided to destroy these two cities (Genesis 18:16-21). Also, the word for 'know' is 'yada,' which has many meanings, one of them sexual. Based on this, the argument has been made that the men of the city wanted to rape the angels. . . . The citizens of Sodom probably thought the angels were spies and wanted to interrogate them (another definition of 'yada') or . . . rape them to prove their military strength. Neither of these speaks to homosexual acts in any kind of loving and mutual context."

Leviticus 18:22

"You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."

"God has a wonderful plan for all of us, and it includes the beauty and wonder of the sexual relationship between a husband and wife. God loves life! And the only way to create life is through the sexual union of a man and a woman. In Leviticus 18 we read of the many deviations that we as sinful beings can take that are not blessed by God. We see very clearly in this passage God's perspective and view of homosexual sex."

"Culturally, the Israelites were moving into a neighborhood of diverse religious practices. In order to remain pure and show the holiness of God, the Israelites were not to act as their neighbors. Having sex with a man was a ritual performed to appease the god Ba'al in order to have more rain or less, depending upon the season, to have a bountiful harvest. Other religious practices that were considered an abomination include . . . beard trimming (19:27) (and) tattooing (19:28)."

Romans 1:26-27

"For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error."

"We see in this passage that God 'gave them up' to their sins. God did not create us as robots, but rather as free beings who can choose what and who we will follow. By the choices we make, we can follow the road that leads to freedom (God's plan) or the road that leads to bondage (our plan). Whatever the sin may be, if we are not willing to follow God's plan for our lives, He gives us just what we want. For those who would choose sexual immorality, the result is shame and spiritual separation from God."

"Verse 26 begins, 'For this reason.' For what reason? We must look at the passage above in order to discover what argument Paul is continuing. We find the answer in Romans 1:18-25. Again, it is that pesky problem of idolatry.

The cultural, spiritual context in which Paul was writing included, among worshiping idols, sexual acts in order to please the goddess Aphrodite, the Great Mother. During their main festival, men would, in the midst of religious fervor, emasculate themselves. They would then become eunuchs and serve the goddess as temple prostitutes. Clearly, this passage does not address the lives of gays and lesbians."

1 Cor. 6:9-10

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

VERSES AS WRITTEN IN THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION OF THE BIBLE

"We see in our passage a list of the sins of the unrighteous. These sins are noted by Paul because they were the prevalent sins in Corinth at that time. One should read the next verse, Verse 11, to see the marvelous grace of God that washes us clean, brings a new love for God and holiness, and sets us free to follow His plan for our lives."

"The argument against homosexuality in this scripture rests on the mistranslation of two Greek words. The first, 'malakos,' is translated as 'male prostitute' in the New Revised Standard Version and 'effeminate' in other translations. It is used only three other times in the New Testament, when Jesus was talking to the crowds about what they expected John the Baptist to be like. Jesus asks the crowd if they expected to see a man dressed in fine (malakos) clothing. When applied to a person it would mean 'gutless, soft.' A second word, 'arsenokoites,' has traditionally been translated 'sodomite.' This word is also used in 1 Timothy 1:10. Actually, there was a term for male homosexuals at that time: "arrenokoites," which Paul, a well-educated Roman citizen would have known. (Arsenokoites) appears to be the Greek counterpart to the Hebrew word 'gedesh' used in the Hebrew scriptures, referring to pagan priests and also translated as 'sodomites.' In other words, sexual practices in religious ritual, once again."

MORE ONLINE

Because of space constraints, The Gazette was unable to print the full text of these arguments. To read more, go to gazette.com and click on Life.

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The ruling did not legalize same-sex weddings in Israel.

"We hope that one day any couple who wants to marry in Israel, whether homosexual or heterosexual, will be able to do it," said Yoav Loeff, spokesman for the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, which represented two of the five gay couples who had asked the court to rule on the matter.

The male couples had married in Canada and obtained marriage certificates there. But when the couples returned to Israel, the Interior Ministry refused to change their marital status from single to married.

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NEW YORK • Long under fire from the left, Wal-Mart is now a target of Christian conservatives urging shoppers to boycott the huge retailer's post-Thanksgiving sales because of its low-key outreach to some gay-rights organizations.

One group, the American Family Association, is asking supporters to stay away from Wal-Mart on Friday and Saturday, two of the busiest shopping days of the year. Another group, Operation Save America, plans prayer-and-preaching rallies outside many Wal-Mart stores Friday.

The corporate actions that triggered the protests were little different from those taken by scores of major companies in recent years: Wal-Mart paid $25,000 this summer to become a member of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce and donated $60,000 to Out and Equal, which promotes gay-rights advances in the workplace.

Conservative leaders viewed these actions as a betrayal of Wal-Mart's

SEE WAL-MART • PAGE 4

added partner benefits

FROM PAGE 1

traditions, which have included efforts to weed out magazines with racy covers and CDs with explicit lyrics.

"This has been Christian families' favorite store — and now they're giving in, sliding down the slippery slope so many other corporations have gone down," said the Rev. Flip Benham of Operation Save America. "They're all being extorted by the radical homosexual agenda."

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. spokesman David Tovar said the company's outreach to the gay-rights groups is part of a broader effort to best serve its diverse customer base.

"We take pride that we treat every customer, every supplier, every member of our communities fairly and equally," Tovar said Tuesday. "We do not have a position on same-sex marriage. ... What we do have is a strong commitment to diversity. We're against discrimination everywhere."

Justin Nelson, president of the Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, said conservative activists had misrepresented his business-oriented group as a leading advocate of gay marriage in order to tarnish Wal-Mart.

"Their campaign has not been to educate, but to mislead," he said.

Wal-Mart ranks in the middle among companies rated by the Human Rights Campaign, a major gay-rights group, for workplace policies toward gays. Scores of companies now have a perfect 100 rating, while Wal-Mart's rating has risen from 14 in 2002 to 65 this year as it added sexual orientation to its nondiscrimination code and offered some domestic-partner benefits.

Tim Wildmon, the American Family Association's president, said Wal-Mart had been responsive to conservative pressure on a different issue, approving use of the word "Christmas" in advertising and employee greetings this season after shifting to a "happy holidays" phrasing last year.

ION

Custody battle ends for same-sex couple

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Lisa Miller and Janet Jenkins had a child while in a same-sex civil union in Vermont.

The breakup of their relationship, and what it means for their daughter, Isabella, has for years been a source of tension between the Vermont courts, which recognize both women as Isabella's mothers, and a Virginia judge who granted sole custody to Miller, Isabella's biological mother, reasoning that Virginia law makes same-sex unions "void in all respects."

But Tuesday a three-judge panel of the Virginia appeals court unanimously accepted a ruling of the Vermont Supreme Court that conferred parental rights on both women.

RELIGION

Conservative Jews may shake up gay p

Panel to consider dropping rabbi, ceremony bans

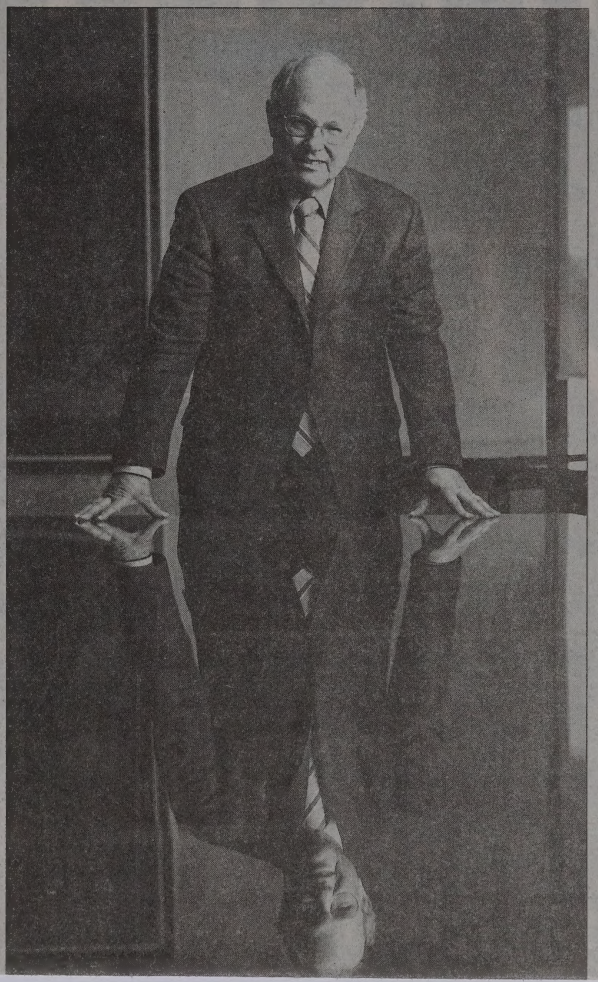
By LARRY GORDON
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Rabbi Elliot Dorff concedes his opinions about ordaining gays and restricting some sexual activity are likely to upset traditionalists and liberals in Judaism's Conservative movement.

An international rabbinical council is scheduled this week to debate and vote on possibly dropping the unevenly enforced bans against gay rabbis and same-sex commitment ceremonies.

Dorff, rector of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles' Bel-Air area and a bioethicist, is one of the lead authors of a position paper that would end the bans. But, keeping some tradition of rabbinical interpretation of the Bible, his proposal would prohibit anal sex between men. Other forms of consensual, monogamous sex would be permitted.

Jewish leaders say this could be a watershed moment for Conservative Judaism, which occupies the theological middle ground between Orthodox and Reform.



ment's Rabbinical Assembly and guides general policies, convenes Tuesday and Wednesday in New York. But because only six of the panel's 25 votes are needed to approve a position paper, or teshuvah — from the Hebrew for "answer" — it is likely a contradictory policy will be adopted as well. Such a split result would allow rabbis and seminaries to choose which course to follow.

The authors of Jewish law are always affected by societal changes, said Dorff, who has a doctorate in philosophy from Columbia University.

LEARNING FROM DAUGHTER

Dorff said he came to know many gay men in the 1980s during pastoral work with AIDS patients. His thinking also was influenced by research showing people are born homosexual, as demonstrated, he said, by one of his four children, a lesbian who has had a child by artificial insemination.

A restriction on gay anal sex, he said, is similar to rules against heterosexual intercourse during menstruation. But requiring celibacy would be, he said, cruel and "very un-Jewish."

Whatever the vote's outcome, some Conservative Jews fear it could trigger further erosion in their U.S. ranks of about 1.3 million.

Seminary in New York, one of two Conservative seminaries in North America. The other is the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at Los Angeles' University of Judaism.

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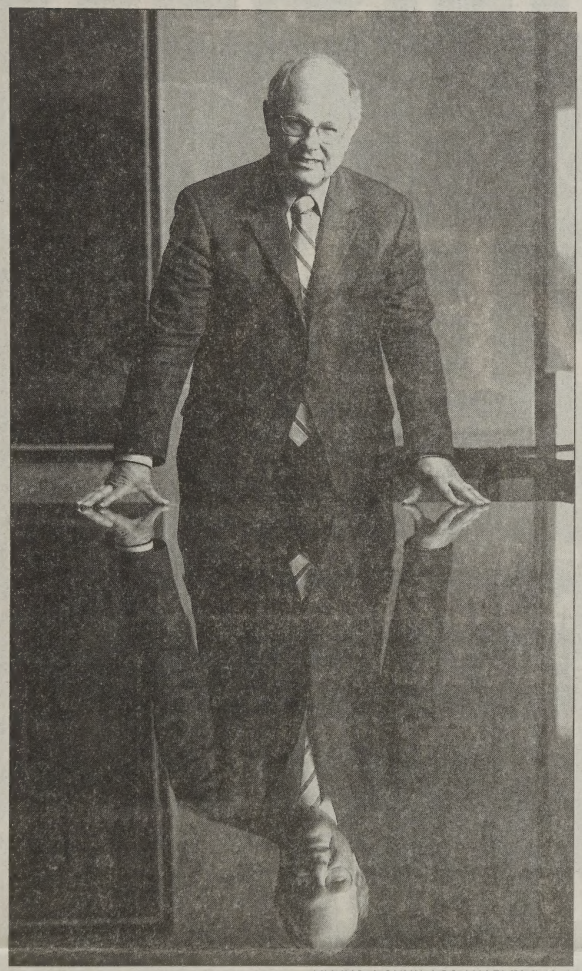

MYUNG J. CHUN, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Rabbi Elliot Dorff, rector of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles, concedes his views may upset traditionalists and liberals.

It also is another example of Christian and Jewish denominations struggling to be more welcoming of gays while abiding by what some view as scriptural injunctions against homosexuality.

"It is a compromise, no question," Dorff, 63, said recently.

It seeks "to maintain the continuity of the law to the extent that we can, while at the same time getting rid of the harm it causes."

He cited the pain gays feel at not being fully included in Jewish life and the loss of Conservative movement members, gay and straight, who don't agree with current policies.

More traditionalist Conservative Jews contend ordaining gays would violate what they see as the denunciation of homosexuality in Leviticus: "Do not lie with a man as one would lie with a woman; it is an abomination."

Conversely, some rabbis are seeking to lift the bans, with no sexual restrictions, as the Reform movement did in 1990.

Dorff's compromise, as he predicted, is being criticized as logically incoherent and possibly open to mockery as bedroom policing.

Still, observers say, the stance by Dorff and his two coauthors might well pass when the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, which is part of the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly and guides general policies, convenes Tuesday and Wednesday in New York. But because only six of the panel's 25 votes are needed to approve a position paper, or teshuvah — from the Hebrew for "answer" — it is likely a contradictory policy will be adopted as well. Such a split result would allow rabbis and seminaries to choose which course to follow.

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Whatever the vote's outcome, some Conservative Jews fear it could trigger further erosion in their U.S. ranks of about 1.3 million.

Conservative Judaism used to be the largest wing of American Jewry but now represents about 33 percent of Jewish households, compared with 39 percent for Reform, according to the 2001 National Jewish Population Survey.

Some Canadian synagogues have talked of leaving the Conservative movement if the bans are lifted, echoing the splintering in the Episcopal Church over the consecration of a gay bishop in New Hampshire.

"Am I worried? You bet," said Rabbi Joel Roth, a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, one of two Conservative seminaries in North America. The other is the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at Los Angeles' University of Judaism.

Roth, author of a motion that upholds the ban on gay clergy, said the decision would define whether Conservatives remain halachic, meaning based on Jewish law. "And I don't think there is anything more important than that," he said.

In Roth's view, Jewish law forbids all homosexual sex.

"It is as unacceptable to ordain people who thought you could eat cheeseburgers," he said, referring to kosher rules against mixing meat and dairy. Gay people should be welcomed at temples, but a moral God can demand their celibacy, he said.

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Thursday, December 7, 2006

Tradition out the window for Jews

Scholars take laxer view on gay clergy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK • Conservative Jewish scholars eased their ban Wednesday on ordaining gays, upending thousands of years of precedent while stopping short of fully accepting gay clergy.

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, which interprets religious law for the movement, adopted three starkly conflicting policies that nonetheless gave gays the chance to serve as clergy. Four committee members who wanted to uphold the ban on ordaining gays resigned in protest after the vote.

One policy upholds the prohibition against gay rabbis. Another, billed as a compromise, maintains a ban on male sodomy but permits gay ordination and allows blessing ceremonies for same-sex couples. The third policy upholds the ban on gay sexual relationships in Jewish law and mentions the option for gays to undergo therapy aimed at changing their sexual orientation.

That leaves seminaries and synagogues to decide on their own which approach to follow.

It will also test what Conservative Jewish leaders call their "big tent" — allowing diverse practices by the movement's more than 1,000 rabbis and 750 North American synagogues.

The 25-member panel made its decision in a two-day closed meeting in an Upper East Side synagogue. Students from a gay-advocacy group at the Jewish Theological Seminary, the flagship school of Conservative Judaism, stood vigil nearby while the results were announced.

Conservative leaders are struggling to hold the shrinking middle ground of American Judaism, losing members to both the liberal Reform and the traditional Orthodox branches.

Reform Jews, as well as the smaller Reconstructionist branch, allow gays to become rabbis; the Orthodox bar gays and women from ordination.

"DT" 12/12/06

Pastor who quit confesses to gay affairs

Englewood church leader admits to lifelong struggle

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ENGLEWOOD • The founding pastor of the 2,100-member Grace Chapel has resigned after he said he's had sexual relations with men.

Paul Barnes, who led the church for 28 years, told his congregation Sunday in a videotaped message that church leaders allowed The Denver Post to view.

He and his wife have two adult daughters.

"While we cannot condone what he has done, we continue to support and love Paul," associate pastor Dave Palmer said in a written statement.

Palmer told The Denver Post that the church got an anonymous call last week from a person who overheard a conversation in which someone mentioned "blowing the whistle" on evangelical preachers engaged in homosexuality, including Barnes.

Palmer told the newspaper he met with Barnes, who confessed. A board of elders held an emergency meeting Thursday and accepted Barnes' resignation.

"I have struggled with homosexuality since I was a 5-year-old boy," Barnes, 54, said in the videotaped message. "... I can't tell you the number of nights I have cried myself to sleep, begging God to take this away."

He described struggling with what he believes is the biblical teaching that homosexuality is an abomination.

Ted Haggard, who founded the 14,000-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs, was removed last month as head of the church after a Denver man alleged Haggard paid him for sex. Haggard confessed to sexually immoral conduct.

Haggard also resigned as president of the National Association of Evangelicals, where he condemned homosexuality.

WASHINGTON

Pregnancy stirs gay-rights debate

Cheney, daughter draw criticism

LOS ANGELES TIMES

WASHINGTON • No Republican in Washington is more beloved by social conservatives than Vice President Dick Cheney, who with his wife, Lynne, has backed every issue dear to them for six years.

News that Cheney's openly gay daughter, Mary, is pregnant has therefore touched a raw nerve, as advocates for conservative family values struggle to reconcile their loyalty to the Cheneys with their opposition to same-sex relationships — and particularly raising a child without a father.

"Not only is she doing a disservice to her child, she's voiding all the effort her father put into the Bush administration," said Janice Shaw Crouse, senior fellow at the Beverly LaHaye Institute, the think tank run by Concerned Women for America.

Asked why the administration downplayed the news, she added, "This is Cheney's daughter; anything they say will make the situation worse."

The vice president's office confirmed Wednesday that Mary Cheney, 37, an executive at AOL, was expecting her first child with her partner of 15 years, Heather Poe. The vice president and his wife issued a statement saying they are "looking forward with eager anticipation to the arrival of their sixth grandchild."

Cheney's older daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Philip Perry, had their fifth child in July.

White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said that when Cheney told President Bush of Mary Cheney's pregnancy, "the president congratulated them and said he is very happy for them."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Mary Cheney, left, daughter of Vice President Dick Cheney, sat with her partner, Heather Poe, in Madison Square Garden during the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York.

Some groups that oppose same-sex marriage and gay adoptions — such as the Family Research Council and the Eagle Forum — declined to comment.

Others, however, were critical, albeit with a delicate touch not always seen in the political wars over gay issues.

"Children deserve the very best we can offer, and gay adoption — by definition — intentionally denies children either a mother or a father," said Carrie Gordon Earll, an analyst for Focus on the Family, the Colorado Springs-based ministry. "Adoption laws should put the needs of children first, above the desires of adults."

Family Pride, a Washington-based organization that supports gay parenthood and organized gay families to join the Easter egg roll on the White House lawn this year, argued that Cheney's pregnancy will focus attention on the injustice of parents without equal rights.

Cheney and Poe live in Virginia, which has a state law and a constitutional amendment prohibiting same-sex marriage or civil unions, and where the legal status of adoption by gays is unclear.

"Unless they move to a handful of less restrictive states, Heather will never be able to have a legal relationship with her child," said Jennifer Chrisler, Family Pride's executive director. "Grandpa Cheney has been part of an administration that has leveled unprecedented attacks (on gays) ... If this doesn't make it real for him, I don't know what will."

Social conservatives countered that the case highlights the tragedy of children raised without fathers. "The best thing we can do for a child is to provide a father and a mother," said Crouse.

Others disagreed.

"All of the peer-reviewed social science studies show that gay people can and are good parents," said consultant Chris Barron, former political director for the Log Cabin Republicans, the largest organization for gays in the GOP. "Research shows that the difficulty is for single parents, who are in more difficult economic situations and are forced to spend less time with the children."

"GT" 12/15/06

N.J. lawmakers approve civil unions for same-sex couples

THE WASHINGTON POST

NEW YORK • With a mandate from New Jersey's highest court to offer gay couples the same rights as heterosexuals, the state Legislature voted Thursday to create civil unions, but stopped short of using the word "marriage."

Democrat Gov. Jon Corzine has said he will sign the bill into law, making New Jersey the third state to offer civil unions, which extends all the rights that state law affords married people, but gives gay people a status separate from heterosexuals.

Corzine, who does not support gay marriage, will review the details "sooner, rather than later," said his spokesman, Anthony Coley.

During the Senate debate, Sen. Loretta Weinberg, the prime sponsor of the bill, suggested that the Legislature might in the future change the name "civil union" to marriage.

"This is the art of the possible," she said. "The possible is to guarantee to the couples that I know, people who have been together longer than the average marriage lasts in the state of New Jersey ... all the same legal rights that I enjoyed in my almost 40 years of marriage."

New Jersey lawmakers have danced warily around the question of same-sex marriage in recent years.

The Legislature passed a domestic-partnership law in 2004, but that accorded only limited legal rights.

Thursday's measure would write civil unions into all sections of the state's marriage laws, including those governing divorce, prenuptial agreements, custody, inheritance and power of attorney in financial and medical matters.

"GT" 12/16/06

Our liberties are dependent on defending others' rights

By LEONARD PITTS JR.

This is for a reader who demands to know why I write about gay issues. His conclusion is that I must secretly be gay myself.

Actually, he doesn't express himself quite that civilly. To the contrary, his e-mails — which, until recently, were arriving at the rate of about one a week — evince a juvenility that would embarrass a reasonably intelligent fifth-grader.

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Anyway, to get back to the point, I'm not here to argue sexuality. I just find myself intrigued by the idea that if you're not gay, you shouldn't care about gay rights.

The most concise answer I can give is cribbed from what a white kid said 40 or so years ago, as white college students were risking their lives to travel south and register black people to vote. Somebody asked why. He said he acted from an understanding that his freedom was bound up with the freedom of every other man.

I know it sounds cornier than Kellogg's, but that's pretty much how I feel.

I know also that some folks are touchy know something about housing discrimination, they do know job discrimination, they do know murder for the sin of existence, they do know the denial of civil rights and they do know what it is like to be used as scapegoat and boogeyman by demagogues and political opportunists.

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Among the things we seem to have lost in the years since that white kid made his stand is the ability, the imagination, the willingness to put ourselves into the skin of those who are not like us. I find it telling that Vice President Dick Cheney hews to the hard conservative line on virtually every social issue, except gay marriage. It is, of course, no coincidence that Cheney has a daughter who is a lesbian. Which tells me his position is based not on principle but, rather, on loving his daughter.

It is a fine thing to love your daughter. I would argue, however, that it is also a fine thing and in some ways, a finer thing, to love your neighbor's daughter, no matter her sexual orientation, religion, race, creed or economic status — and to want her freedom as eagerly as you want your own.

I believe in moral coherence. And Rule No. 1 is, you cannot assert your own humanity, then turn right around and deny someone else's.

If that makes me gay, fine.

THE GAZETTE 12/14/06

Embracing their sexuality, refusing to hide from God

Gay evangelicals say that life doesn't have to be a lie

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DENVER • Sheila Burris tried to pray it away. She would lock herself in her dorm room closet with her gospel music, Bible and the belief she was going to hell.

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Only after a long journey that included rereading the Scriptures and getting advice from her grandmother that she listen to God, not people, did Burris conclude that two important aspects of her identity were not at odds.

She was a lesbian and an evangelical Christian.

"I never stopped loving God," said Burris, 43, of Littleton. "I thought I had to change and live a lie. I realized I didn't have to make that choice. I could be who I was, and God would still love me."

The experiences of gay and lesbian evangelicals — and how the broader evangelical community responds to homosexuality — is back in the public eye after two Colorado pastors fell from grace over an issue that has divided Christianity for decades.

In November, Colorado Springs pastor Ted Haggard, a national figure, denied being gay while confessing to "sexual immorality" in response to allegations of a three-year relationship with a male prostitute.

A month later, the relatively unknown Rev. Paul Barnes resigned from Grace Chapel in Douglas County after admitting to sexual infidelity with other men and "struggling with homosexuality" since he was 5.

Rather than lash out in anger, many gay and lesbian evangelicals have reacted to the scandals with empathy because they recognize their own stories.

For Christian gays and lesbians, confronting their sexuality can be a faith crisis, said Melissa Wilcox, an assistant professor of religion at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash., and author of "Coming Out in Christianity."

Gay Christians who have reconciled their spiritual and sexual identities may not feel at home in liberal Christian churches because the worship is too stuffy or biblical authority isn't stressed as much, Wilcox said. So some stay closeted in evangelical churches.

Burris found a home at Open Door Community Church, which meets at a United Methodist church in Denver's Capitol Hill neighborhood. Founded three years ago, the church boasts evangelical-style contemporary worship and teaches that sexual orientation is a discovery, not a choice.

The church preaches "responsible freedom," combining honesty, biblical truth and a relationship with Jesus, said founding pastor David Plunkett. That means encouraging monogamous relationships and "healthy choices," he said.

"When someone isn't honest, everything goes downhill from there," Plunkett said. "You marry someone of the opposite sex you're not attracted to. You say you're cured. But you're not. So you do things in secret."

Miguel De La Torre figures that if he can have a change of heart, others can too.

A Southern Baptist minister, De La Torre preached the seven Bible verses his tradition taught condemned homosexuality.

Then, when he was in his 20s, a friend came out to him as gay. De La Torre said he prayed and fasted with the man, even tried to cast out demons. But at 3 a.m., De La Torre would awaken to a knock on his door. His friend had fallen again.

De La Torre revisited those Bible verses. He said he found texts dealing with pedophilia, male prostitution and temple prostitution but none referring to same-sex couples living in committed relationships.

Burris and other gay evangelicals share similar stories. Because biblical authority is a key tenet of the tradition, they search for answers there.

"One should not have to give up their faith tradition just because God created them gay," said De La Torre, a professor at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. "As more pastors find out their children might be gay, the head deacon's kids are gay, and these individuals are still strongly committed Christians, it forces the church to rethink this."

The majority evangelical view is that homosexuality results from early childhood influences, though some are starting to acknowledge genetics play at least some role.

"The majority of evangelicals would say even if there is a genetic link, we are still called to manage that in a healthy way and bring that under the authority of the teaching of the Bible," said Craig Williford, president of Denver Seminary.

"GT" 12/13/06

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As my anonymous correspondent ably demonstrates, there are worse things to be.

Pitts, winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, is a columnist for the Miami Herald. Readers may e-mail him at lpitts@herald.com.

THE GAZETTE 12/14/06

Embracing their sexuality, refusing to hide from God

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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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"I never stopped loving God," said Burris, 43, of Littleton. "I thought I had to change and live a lie. I realized I didn't have to make that choice. I could be who I was, and God would still love me."

The experiences of gay and lesbian evangelicals — and how the broader evangelical community responds to homosexuality — is back in the public eye after two Colorado pastors fell from grace over an issue that has divided Christianity for decades.

In November, Colorado Springs pastor Ted Haggard, a national figure, denied being gay while confessing to "sexual immorality" in response to allegations of a three-year relationship with a male prostitute.

A month later, the relatively unknown Rev. Paul Barnes resigned from Grace Chapel in Douglas County after admitting to sexual infidelity with other men and "struggling with homosexuality" since he was 5.

Rather than lash out in anger, many gay and lesbian evangelicals have reacted to the scandals with empathy because they recognize their own stories.

For Christian gays and lesbians, confronting their sexuality can be a faith crisis, said Melissa Wilcox, an assistant professor of religion at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash., and author of "Coming Out in Christianity."

Gay Christians who have reconciled their spiritual and sexual identities may not feel at home in liberal Christian churches because the worship is too stuffy or biblical authority isn't stressed as much, Wilcox said. So some stay closeted in evangelical churches.

Burris found a home at Open Door Community Church, which meets at a United Methodist church in Denver's Capitol Hill neighborhood. Founded three years ago, the church boasts evangelical-style contemporary worship and teaches that sexual orientation is a discovery, not a choice.

The church preaches "responsible freedom," combining honesty, biblical truth and a relationship with Jesus, said founding pastor David Plunkett. That means encouraging monogamous relationships and "healthy choices," he said.

"When someone isn't honest, everything goes downhill from there," Plunkett said. "You marry someone of the opposite sex you're not attracted to. You say you're cured. But you're not. So you do things in secret."

Miguel De La Torre figures that if he can have a change of heart, others can too.

A Southern Baptist minister, De La Torre preached the seven Bible verses his tradition taught condemned homosexuality.

Then, when he was in his 20s, a friend came out to him as gay. De La Torre said he prayed and fasted with the man, even tried to cast out demons. But at 3 a.m., De La Torre would awaken to a knock on his door. His friend had fallen again.

De La Torre revisited those Bible verses. He said he found texts dealing with pedophilia, male prostitution and temple prostitution but none referring to same-sex couples living in committed relationships.

Burris and other gay evangelicals share similar stories. Because biblical authority is a key tenet of the tradition, they search for answers there.

"One should not have to give up their faith tradition just because God created them gay," said De La Torre, a professor at Iliff School of Theology in Denver. "As more pastors find out their children might be gay, the head deacon's kids are gay, and these individuals are still strongly committed Christians, it forces the church to rethink this."

The majority evangelical view is that homosexuality results from early childhood influences, though some are starting to acknowledge genetics play at least some role.

"The majority of evangelicals would say even if there is a genetic link, we are still called to manage that in a healthy way and bring that under the authority of the teaching of the Bible," said Craig Williford, president of Denver Seminary.

NATION

State's court reproaches its Legislature

Massachusetts justices say they can't force lawmakers to vote on gay marriage

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON • Massachusetts' highest court said Wednesday it has no authority to force lawmakers to vote on a proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage. But it did rebuke the Legislature for its "indifference to, or defiance of, its constitutional duties."

The unanimous 7-0 ruling leaves the fate of the amendment up in the air in the only state that allows gay marriage.

Opponents of gay marriage have collected 170,000 signatures in favor of an amendment to end the practice. The measure needs the Legislature's approval to appear on the 2008 ballot, however, and lawmakers refused to vote on the proposal last month. Gov. Mitt Romney, a Republican expected to run for president in 2008, and other opponents of gay marriage responded by suing to try to force the lawmakers to act.

In its ruling, the Supreme Judicial Court — the same court that ruled in 2003 the Massachusetts Constitution gives gays the right to marry — said it cannot force a vote. It said the Legislature's obligation to vote was "beyond serious debate" but said the most the court could do was remind lawmakers of that duty.

"There is no presently articulated judicial remedy for the Legislature's indifference to, or defiance of, its constitutional duties," the court said.

The proposed amendment needs the approval of lawmakers in two consecutive two-year sessions to appear on the 2008 ballot. The last day of the current session is Tuesday. If lawmakers adjourn without taking up the amendment, the measure will die.

The proposed amendment defines marriage as the union of a man and woman. It would leave all existing same-sex marriages intact but would ban any more such weddings. More than 8,000 gay couples have been married in Massachusetts.

Opponents of gay marriage argue it should be up to the people, not the courts, to define something such as marriage. Supporters of gay marriage say minorities' civil rights should not be put to a public vote.

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Democrats.

John Aravosis, the founder of Americablog, deserves recognition as well. This year, he solidified himself as one of this nation's most prominent bloggers. He has now joined Andrew Sullivan as an elite gay newsmaker who has crossed over to yield considerable influence in the debate over today's leading issues. Likewise, John Byrne, founder of Raw Story, deserves our respect for his ascension into this pantheon of pundits.

The web has also led to the explosion of online entrepreneurs who have demonstrably strengthened the GLBT movement. Strong voices have emerged from blogs such as Pam's House Blend, founded by Pam Spaulding, and Jeremy Hooper's humorous site, Good As You.

In 2006, the web also fostered the rise of what I refer to as the Truth Movement, where fundamentalist propaganda is vociferously challenged. The right wing "God Squad" is finally being held accountable for their lies by gadflies who no longer let them dehumanize GLBT people without suffering the consequences. Truth Wins Out's recent video of a scientist refuting James Dobson's misuse of her research is just one example.

The Truth Movement includes Mike Airhart, founder of the site Ex-Gay Watch, as well as Internet sleuths, such as Joe Brummer and Jim Burroway. While many people might not be familiar with these advocates, they are the movement's fact checkers who play this game as if it were chess.

In terms of establishment advocacy, the GLBT community has much to be proud of. Under the leadership of Joe Solmonese, the Human Rights Campaign performed admirably in this year's elections. Matt Foreman, of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, has established himself as a voice of passion and emerged as a formidable leader. His words reverberate, which is a refreshing change from the poll-tested pabulum we are too often spoon-fed from our political organizations.

Another advance in 2006 was the growth of gay spiritual groups that are working to wrest back control of the Bible from extremists. Furniture mogul Mitchell Gold is leading the way with his tremendous new organization Faith in America. SoulForce's Jeff Lutes also deserves credit for the highly successful Equality Ride.

Finally, philanthropists such as Tim Gill, the Gill Foundation, and Jon Stryker, the Arcus Foundation, are the engines behind much of the GLBT movement's recent progress. Through their incredible generosity many gay organizations are finally on equal footing with our opponents.

Well, 2007 is nearly here and it has to be better than 2006, if only, because we know that former Sens. Rick Santorum and George Allen are on Monster.com looking for new jobs. And, we are one year closer to the end of the Bush error, I mean era. Hold that pleasant thought and have a very happy new year!

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Wayne Besen is an author, activist, columnist and public speaker.

He is a former spokesperson for the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest gay and lesbian advocacy group. He has appeared as a guest on leading news and political talk shows including: the *NBC Nightly News*, *The Roseanne Show*, CNN's *Talk Back Live and The Point*, Fox's *O'Reilly Factor* and *Hannity and Colmes*, *Hard Copy*, *MSNBC News* and PAX's *Faith Under Fire*.

Besen is the author of a book nominated this year for two Lambda Literary Awards, "Anything But Straight: Unmasking the Scandals and Lies Behind the Ex-Gay Myth".

SOMETIME, PERHAPS, IN THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE, PEOPLE IN MANY MAIN-LINE DENOMINATION CHURCHES WILL HEAR...
...GOOD NEWS! THE DIVISIVE ISSUE OF THE ORDINATION OF GAYS HAS FINALLY BEEN RESOLVED ONCE AND FOR ALL!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE!
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